

Mexican government, and had been persisted in merely to furnish an excuse to successive Mexican administrations for keeping up a strong army at home.

Under these circumstances, the first thing for the Texan government to do was, obviously, to ratify the treaties entered into in 1840 with Great Britain, and accordingly, the Texan Senate having at last assented to them, Ashbel Smith was sent abroad, accredited as minister to both England and France, with instructions to exchange ratifications as soon as practicable. The next point to be attended to by him was to secure "prompt and efficient action" in respect to mediation—for the attainment of peace was "an object of paramount importance."¹

Smith arrived in England May 10, 1842, but it was not until seven weeks later—on the twenty-eighth of June—that the ratifications of the treaties were exchanged and the independence of Texas was fully recognized by the British government.

Long before the exchange of ratifications was effected a British diplomatic agent to Texas had been appointed. This gentleman, who was destined to play a conspicuous if not a very effective part, was Captain Charles Elliot, of the Royal navy, who had already made a considerable stir in the world. He was a man of good family, had entered the navy as a midshipman in 1815—the Waterloo year—and had become a captain at the age of twenty-seven. He rose ultimately to the rank of admiral, but almost all his service after he was thirty years old was administrative or diplo-

¹ Jones to Smith, March 9, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 948. Ashbel Smith, like Archer and Anson Jones, was a physician. He was born in Connecticut, graduated at Yale in the class of 1824, and went to Texas to practise his profession in 1836. He was appointed to his diplomatic post March 2, 1842. The business of exchanging the ratifications of the three British treaties was a matter that required some caution, as many people in England still opposed recognition. He seems to have been well qualified for the position and to have made an excellent impression both in England and in France. Lieutenant Maissin, Admiral Baudin's aid, noted his indebtedness to Dr. Smith, who had acted as interpreter and guide to the admiral's party during their visit to Texas in the spring of 1839. "*Sa parfaite connaissance de la langue française, son instruction variée, sa grande obligeance ont donné à ses services un prix inestimable.*"—(Blanchard et Dauzats, 524, note.)

matic. In 1834 he was sent in a quasi-diplomatic capacity to China, where he was concerned in bringing on what was called the Opium War, and where he annexed the island of Hong-Kong, made a treaty with the Chinese that both parties subsequently disavowed, quarrelled with the principal military and naval officers on the spot, and returned to England in the summer of 1841 to find himself the centre of a violent controversy. In order, it would seem, to get him quietly out of the way he was appointed to Texas in August, 1841, just before the fall of Lord Melbourne's ministry; but his departure, what with the ministerial crisis and the difficulty in ratifying the Texan treaties, was long delayed.

He reached Texas August 23, 1842, and soon became on most intimate terms with Houston, Anson Jones, and other leading men in the republic. He was at this time forty-one years old, full of energy (in spite of the fact that he suffered a good deal in health), and of a cheerful and optimistic spirit. Charles Greville, who met him for the first time in November, 1841, found him "animated, energetic, and vivacious, clever, eager, high-spirited and gay," treating with great contempt the British officers who disagreed with him and disapproving the course which the government proposed in respect to China.¹

Having thus got diplomatic relations with Great Britain in a fair way of being regularly established, the next step of the Texan government in the path of peace was to instruct Ashbel Smith to propose to Great Britain and France that they should join with the United States in what was called a "triple interposition."² It was, he was told, "the first wish of the President's heart to bring about an amicable adjustment of the long-continued and profitless difficulties between this Government and that of Mexico."³

Smith, on his first arrival in London, had found the sentiment generally hostile to Texas, and when he urged upon

¹ Greville, I, 386.

² Jones to Smith, June 7, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 964.

³ Terrell to Smith, Aug. 20, 1842; *ibid.*, 1007.

Aberdeen's attention the provisions of the treaty with Texas, by which Great Britain had undertaken to mediate with Mexico, he was told that the subject had frequently been pressed on the consideration of the Mexican government, which had positively declined to entertain it. "*The Earl of Aberdeen could give me no hopes that the Mediation of England would be successful.*"¹ Under these unhopeful conditions the instructions as to the "triple interposition" reached Smith in August in Paris. He at once called upon Guizot, who stated that the government of France would readily act in concert with the United States and Great Britain in mediating between Texas and Mexico, but suggested that the unfriendly feeling subsisting between the United States and Mexico might form a reason why the American government would not join in making a triple representation on this subject.² At the request of Guizot, Smith addressed him a note on the same day, making the proposal in writing; and he also wrote briefly to Aberdeen, stating that he was informed the subject would be presented to her Majesty's government by the French ambassador in London.³

Guizot replied in writing that the French government willingly agreed to the Texan request and would unite, with pleasure, its good offices to those of the cabinets of London and Washington to facilitate, as far as it could, a pacification which was so desirable from every point of view. He had already, he said, instructed the French representative in London to arrange with the British cabinet, and he intended to send instructions to the French minister in Mexico directing him to act in accord with the British minister.⁴

The British government returned no written answer to Smith's proposal, but when he went back to London later in the year he had interviews with Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Addington, the Under-Secretary of State,⁵ who showed him

¹ Smith to Jones, July 3, 1842; *ibid.*, 972. Italics in the original.

² Smith to Jones, Aug. 15, 1842; *ibid.*, 1383.

³ Smith to Guizot, Aug. 15, 1842; *ibid.*, 1387. Smith to Aberdeen, Aug., 1842; *ibid.*, 1011.

⁴ Guizot to Smith, Aug. 22, 1842; *ibid.*, 1397.

⁵ Henry Unwin Addington, a nephew of the Prime Minister of the early years of the century.

the correspondence between the Foreign Office and Pakenham in Mexico and Lord Cowley in Paris. It appeared from the latter correspondence, as Smith wrote, that—

"The French Government have proffered with alacrity to unite their good offices with the other Powers in the proposed interposition. The British Government however declines acting in conjunction with the American Government for the alleged reason of the unfriendly relations subsisting between the United States and Mexico. They would however be pleased to be aided by the good offices of the French Govt. in the affairs of Texas and Mexico. The fact undoubtedly is, as Mr. Addington distinctly intimated to me in conversation, that the British Government would prefer to act solely in this matter and not conjointly either with France or the United States."¹

A month later Smith had another interview with Guizot in Paris, which turned chiefly on the refusal of England to unite with France and the United States in the proposed triple mediation. Guizot stated that the French minister in Mexico had been instructed, since the refusal of England, to offer separately the good offices of the French government, but he was not prepared to answer definitely whether France would act jointly with the United States, without the acquiescence of England, in making a representation to Texas and Mexico. Smith, however, gathered from his remarks that the French government would be reluctant to take such a course under the existing circumstances.² The fact was, although it was not fully explained to Smith, that Lord Cowley had seen Guizot and explained to him the conclusions of the British cabinet; and that Guizot had replied he was entirely of Lord Aberdeen's opinion, "that a joint mediation of Great Britain, France and the United States for the purpose of effecting an accommodation between Mexico and Texas would not, under present circumstances, answer any good purpose, and that it would be better that each government should act separately, but in strict concert, with a view to the attainment of the proposed objects."³

The British government previous to this time, as appeared

¹ Smith to Jones, Oct. 17, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1027.

² Same to same, Nov. 13, 1842; *ibid.*, 1395.

³ Elliot to Houston, Dec. 27, 1842; *ibid.*, I, 637.

from the correspondence shown to Smith, had really been earnestly renewing the attempts it had made in Lord Palmerston's time to persuade Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas. Immediately after exchanging ratifications of the treaties with Ashbel Smith at the end of June, 1842, Lord Aberdeen had sent instructions to Mexico directing Pakenham to bring the subject again to the attention of the Mexican government. He was to renew the arguments already made, to dwell once more on the friendliness and disinterested conduct of Great Britain, and to point out again the importance of interposing a buffer state between Mexico and the United States. Aberdeen saw much more clearly than his predecessor the difficulties which Mexico was certain to encounter if she should ever make a real attempt to reconquer Texas.

"Considering," he said, "the powerful support with which Texas is likely to meet from the People—I speak not of the Govt.—of the United States, and the unlimited means of recruiting her forces both by land and Sea, which are within the reach of Texas by reason of her proximity to that Country, the sentiments of whose Citizens in general are strongly in favour of the Texians, H. M. Govt. can not but perceive all the difficulties which are likely to surround Mexico."¹

A fortnight later Aberdeen wrote again to Pakenham, pointing out that even if Mexico should succeed in invading Texas the result might very likely be to force annexation to the United States. He also repeated his warning as to the popular American support which Texas was certain to receive, and directed that this view be impressed upon the Mexican authorities.

"You will represent to them," he wrote, "the impossibility of preventing the interference of the People of the United States in this Contest: and you will endeavour to convince them that in the present state of public feeling in that Country, neither the Supreme Government at Washington, nor the Local Governments of the States, however well disposed they might be to do so, could put a stop to that interference. . . . Nor should they allow themselves to suppose that they can at any time count upon succour from Great Britain in their

¹ Aberdeen to Pakenham, July 1, 1842; E. D. Adams, 101.

struggles with Texas, or with the United States. Great Britain is determined to remain strictly neutral."¹

Pakenham in due course laid the matter before the Mexican government, but he received both from Bocanegra and Santa Anna very emphatic refusals to reconsider their determination upon the subject of Texas. Indeed, Bocanegra expressed vehemently his opinion that the conduct of Great Britain was far from friendly. Consequently, when renewed instructions were sent near the end of the year from the British and French Foreign Offices directing offers of mediation, the British and French representatives in Mexico had no difficulty in agreeing that any representations by them to Santa Anna's government would prove useless, and in consequence none were made at that time.²

Before this, however, American mediation had once more been tendered, and again without success. The subject had been brought forward by Reily, the Texan chargé in Washington, who urged upon both Tyler and Webster the propriety and justice of the United States, as the leading power on the continent, mediating between Texas and Mexico. On Wednesday, June 22, 1842, Reily had a conversation with Webster, who said that the President and the cabinet were "extremely desirous to bring about a peace between the two countries," and on the next day Webster gave Reily an opportunity to read instructions he had just written to the American ministers in Mexico and Texas.³

The instructions to Thompson in Mexico were to the effect that the government of the United States saw, with pain, a prospect of a resumption of hostilities. While it claimed no right to interfere, it could not remain indifferent to a prospect of actual warfare. There should be peace, as the commercial interests of the United States would suffer from a state of war. It was also to be borne in mind that if warfare were resumed "crowds of persons" from the United States would certainly attempt to take part in it,

¹ Same to same, July 15, 1842; *ibid.*, 103.

² Pakenham to Aberdeen, Feb. 24, 1843; *ibid.*, 123.

³ Reily to Jones, June 24, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 563-566.

which was something the United States government could not prevent, and which would involve it in serious difficulties. The President had "a clear and strong conviction that a war was not only useless but hopeless, without any attainable object, injurious to both parties, and likely to be, in its continuance, annoying and vexatious to other commercial nations." In view of these considerations, if any intimation should be received of a desire from Mexico for interposition or mediation, the United States would cheerfully undertake to do what it could to bring about peace, but would do nothing unless both parties asked for it.¹ A copy of these instructions was sent at the same time to Eve in Texas, directing him to make the subject known to the Secretary of State of Texas, and to express the hope that Texas would suspend any offensive operation until the result of the application to Mexico should be ascertained.²

Texas would, of course, have been ready to make a formal request for mediation if there had been any prospect that Mexico would unite in it; but the universal belief in Mexico that the United States had had a constant share for years past in stirring up trouble in Texas was quite sufficient to prevent the possibility of her making any such request, and none was ever made.

Reily at the same time had been busy in Washington trying to get at the real attitude of the British government, which both the Texans and Americans then regarded as suspicious. There were even rumors that Mexico was to be directly helped to invade Texas, or at least to blockade the coast,³ and Lord Ashburton was applied to to learn the real attitude of his government. Reily thought that Ashburton would talk to Clay more freely than to anybody else, and he

¹ Webster to Thompson, June 22, 1842; *State Dept. MSS.*

² Webster to Eve, June 23, 1842; *ibid.* Eve to Waples, Aug. 12, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 581.

³ These reports had a certain foundation in the fact that the Mexican government had bought two steamers in England which it sought to arm there, and which were to be commanded by British naval officers, who secured leave of absence for that purpose. The vessels were never of the slightest use to Mexico, and were sold to Spain four years after they crossed the Atlantic. Accounts of the Texan protests and of the uncertain course of Lord Aberdeen

persuaded Clay to ask whether it was true that Great Britain intended to help the Mexicans. The result of the interview between Clay, on the one side, and Ashburton and Fox (the resident British minister), on the other, was reported by Reily as follows:

"Lord Ashburton peremptorily disclaimed any interference of the British Government in behalf of Mexico, and that the British Ministry he said would as soon aid Old Spain in again subjugating the Low Countries, as to aid Mexico in reconquering Texas. Mr. Fox remarked that Great Britain would much rather interpose to bring about a peace between Texas and Mexico than to aid Mexico in her attempts upon Texas, and that the Crown without the consent of Parliament, could not make advances of either money, ammunition or supplies to Mexico. Lord Ashburton farther added, that Great Britain would sooner expect Texas to Conquer Mexico, than Mexico Conquer Texas, and that if the Mexican Government had obtained any money at all, it was as all others obtain it, by loans. Both disclaimed in positive terms again, and again, any interference on the part of Great Britain, in favor of Mexico."¹

On two later occasions Reily had personal interviews with Ashburton, who repeated that Great Britain had not inter-meddled, and had no disposition to do so, and that if it interfered at all it would be to make peace between Mexico and Texas.²

Everett, the American minister in London, also spoke to Lord Aberdeen of the suspicions entertained by some persons that Great Britain was aiding Mexico in her movements against Texas.

"He replied with great readiness that there was no foundation for such a belief, adding with a smile that Mr. Murphy (the Mexican

and the law-officers of the Crown in respect thereto, will be found in E. D. Adams, 79-96, and in *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 961-1055. Hamilton's officious interference in this affair greatly offended President Houston, and his indignation was increased by a proposal which Hamilton made, that he be employed to carry on a secret negotiation with Almonte, "through the instrumentality of my friends Mr. John C. Calhoun and Mr. Webster." The result was an emphatic disavowal of Hamilton's acts and a refusal to employ him in any manner whatever.—(*Ibid.*, 1045, 1056, 784.)

¹ Reily to Jones, April 14, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 553. Henry Stephen Fox was a nephew of Charles James Fox.

² Reily to Jones, April 28 and July 11, 1842; *ibid.*, 558, 568.

Chargé d'Affaires at this Court) could satisfy me on this head. I inferred from this remark that the Mexican Government had endeavored, in some way or other, to obtain the countenance at least of England for the reconquest of Texas."¹

In reality, the British government did not then intend to do anything more than precisely what Aberdeen had told his agents was his purpose, namely, to urge Mexico "to lose no time in coming to an accommodation with Texas on the basis of a recognition of the independence of that country,"² but their efforts, at least up to the summer of 1843, were marked by a good deal of vacillation, due no doubt largely to indifference as well as to ignorance of the subject on the part of the Foreign Office.

While foreign diplomatists in Mexico thus found themselves unable to accomplish anything in their missions of peace, a very unexpected negotiator appeared on the scene. One of the prisoners captured at San Antonio by General Woll in September, 1842, was James W. Robinson, who had been the lieutenant-governor under the provisional government from November, 1835, to March, 1836. Writing to Santa Anna from the castle of Perote on January 9, 1843, Robinson stated that the Texans, after seven years and a half of war, were anxious for peace, and would gladly accept it on terms having for their basis the reunion of the republic with that of Mexico; that some others of his fellow-prisoners were of the same opinion with himself, and that if they could be sent back to Texas they would exert a powerful influence in reuniting Texas with Mexico. He also expressed the opinion that peace could not be made without an armistice, and that Mexican commissioners, together with one or two of the prisoners who were of Robinson's way of thinking, ought to be sent immediately to Texas to enter upon negotiations.

Santa Anna, then at Manga de Clavo,³ transmitted the

¹ Everett to Webster, May 6, 1842; *State Dept. MSS.*

² Elliot to Houston, Dec. 27, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 637.

³ Santa Anna left the city of Mexico October 26, 1842, having previously appointed Bravo President *ad interim*. The excuse given was the ill-health of Santa Anna and his wife. The real reason was the intended dissolution

letter to Tornel, Minister of War, suggesting that though Robinson's object might simply be to obtain his liberty nothing could be lost by hearing him, and some favorable result might be obtained. He therefore requested Tornel to lay the letter before the President *ad interim*, and if that functionary should think it proper, he (Santa Anna) would hear what Robinson had to say, it being understood that he would make no concessions to the latter that would compromise the nation.¹ Bravo, the President *ad interim*, naturally gave Santa Anna full power to do whatever he thought proper, and Santa Anna sent for Robinson to come to Manga de Clavo. The result of their conferences was that a basis of settlement—under which Texas was to have a certain measure of autonomy while remaining a department of Mexico—was drawn up and signed by Santa Anna.

As stated by Robinson on his return to Texas, the proposal was as follows:

"It is proposed that—

"1. Texas should acknowledge the sovereignty of Mexico.

"2. A general act of amnesty to be passed for past acts in Texas.

"3. Texas to form an independent department of Mexico.

"4. Texas to be represented to the general congress.

"5. Texas to institute or originate all local laws, rules and regulations.

"6. No Mexican troops under any pretext whatever to be stationed in Texas."²

Robinson, armed with this document, reached the capital of Texas about the first of April, 1843, and laid Santa Anna's proposition before Houston. There was, of course, no possible chance that the people or the Congress of Texas would consent to return to Mexican allegiance under any conditions; but Houston, while objecting strongly to the terms of the proposals so far as they involved an acknowledgment of Mexican sovereignty, thought that they "evinced a peace-

of the constituent Congress, which was accomplished by Bravo in December, 1842. Santa Anna returned to the capital on March 5, 1843. See chapter XVIII, above.

¹ Santa Anna to Tornel, Feb. 6, 1843; Yoakum, II, 387.

² Niles's *Reg.*, LXIV, 97.

fulness of spirit on the part of the Mexican government," and got Elliot to write to Pakenham to secure an armistice pending negotiations.¹

A confidential letter to Santa Anna from Robinson, gave an account of affairs as he found them in Texas. It was asserted by Houston's friends that he had dictated the letter, but there is nothing in the text which appears to bear out this assertion. The news of Santa Anna's proposals, said Robinson, had not created much excitement, although they had been presented by him in the Texan newspapers "in the most favorable light."² Houston also had "evinced no excitement" over the proposals, but had remarked that since the revolution began, in 1835, the affairs of Texas and Mexico had become much more complicated than they had once been; that Texas had been recognized by foreign powers, and had formed treaties with them; and that if Texas should act independently of the consideration of those powers it would, in his opinion, be treating them with disrespect. Robinson had been unable to find out from Houston what course would be adopted by the Texan government, and could not ascertain what Houston's purposes were—if he had any. Robinson further reported that the people of Texas were not, as he had supposed, torn by factions, and in view of the conditions actually existing he suggested to Santa Anna that all of the Texan prisoners should be released, and that an armistice should be declared for some months, so as to give the people of Texas time to think over the Mexican propositions. "I will not," he concluded, "be so presumptuous as to advise your Excellency about anything; but as things have changed since I communicated with your Excellency in reference to the affairs in Texas I feel bound to inform you of such facts as resulted from my observation."³

¹ Elliot to Pakenham, April 14, 1843; *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 207-213.

² The Galveston *Civilian* spoke of Robinson's proposals "in a decidedly favorable manner," and asked for them serious and respectful consideration. The Galveston *Times*, on the other hand, said the proposals would be consigned by reflecting Texans to the contempt which was all they deserved.—(*Niles's Reg.*, LXIV, 97).

³ Robinson to Santa Anna, April 10, 1843; Yoakum, II, 388-391.

Writing to the American chargé d'affaires, Houston expressed the opinion that Santa Anna's offer to treat with Texas indicated "that some of the powers have touched him in a tender part," but that the whole affair was an absurdity, and the proposal for terms of peace "will do very well to file away as a curiosity for after-times; and that is about as much as can well be made of it."¹ But to Elliot he wrote privately of the advantages that would accrue to England if peace between Mexico and Texas could be brought about on the basis of Texan independence, especially in the event of war between the United States and Great Britain.²

The Texan government officially rejected the proposals. Thus the Texan Secretary of State, writing to the chargé d'affaires in Washington, declared that—

"The propositions of Gen. Santa Anna, have been published by Mr. Robinson through the medium of the public papers, and have every where been met by the people to whom they were addressed with indignation and contempt, and rejected by one unanimous response from the whole country."³

Nevertheless, Robinson's amateur efforts did bear fruit. As soon as Santa Anna received Robinson's letter of April 10 he sent for Percy Doyle, the British chargé (Pakenham having gone home on leave), and told him that he was now ready to agree to an armistice, and would at once give orders for a total cessation of hostilities on his part; and he suggested that Houston should be asked to despatch similar orders to the officers commanding the Texan forces. If this were done "he was ready to receive any Commissioners which might be sent from Texas to treat on the terms proposed by him." This request Doyle transmitted without comment to Elliot.⁴

¹ Houston to Eve, April 22, 1843; *ibid.*, 392, note.

² Houston to Elliot, May 13, 1843; *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 321-326.

³ Jones to Van Zandt, May 8, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 176.

⁴ Doyle to Aberdeen, May 25, 1843; E. D. Adams, 134. Doyle to Elliot, May 27, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1091. A copy of this last letter, together with all the other correspondence in relation to the same matter, was furnished by the Texan State Department to Murphy, the American chargé in Texas,

The formal offer of an armistice was thereupon transmitted to the Texan government by Elliot, with a letter expressing his belief that Santa Anna would not give way on the sovereignty of Mexico, but that the negotiations, if begun, would end in an honorable and desirable pacification.¹ M. de Cramayel, the French minister in Texas, expressed his concurrence in this view, and joined Elliot in urging the proposed armistice. Houston therefore, on June 13, 1843, issued a proclamation declaring that hostilities were suspended pending negotiations for peace, and that the armistice was to continue until notice of an intention to resume hostilities should have been transmitted through the British legation. A copy of the proclamation was sent to Captain Elliot, with a request that he obtain the sanction of Mexico to its terms; and copies of all the papers were forwarded at the same time to the Texan representative at Washington.² Elliot duly transmitted the inquiries of the Texan government to Mexico, and was informed, in reply, through Percy Doyle that the duration of the armistice could best be determined by the military authorities of the two countries; that General Woll, then in command at Matamoros, was authorized to represent the Mexican government; and that it was hoped Texan commissioners would be sent, "with full powers to treat upon the terms of which Mr. Robinson, one of the late Texian prisoners was the Bearer."³

When Santa Anna's proposals to Robinson first reached Lord Aberdeen, in the month of May, 1843, they did not

in the following September. He sent them to Washington, with a despatch in which he said that he could not have obtained them if Houston had not been absent from the seat of government.—(Murphy to Upshur, Sept. 28, 1843; *State Dept. MSS.*) There seems to have been no foundation for the latter statement except Murphy's rooted dislike for Houston. The correspondence was voluntarily given by Jones to Murphy, without the least pretence of concealment or any request that it should be regarded as confidential. The American State Department was disposed at first to censure Murphy for underhand dealing, but subsequently decided he was not at all to blame.—(Upshur to Murphy, Nov. 21, 1843; *State Dept. MSS.*)

¹ Elliot to Jones, June 10, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1090.

² Jones to Elliot and Jones to Van Zandt, June 15, 1843; *ibid.*, 1092, 1093. The proclamation is printed in H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 83.

³ Elliot to Jones, July 24, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1112. Houston's purposes in all this negotiation are discussed at length in J. H. Smith's *Annexation of Texas*, 94-100.

appear to him to be of "a very practical description," or fitted to give rise to more than "a faint hope" of a satisfactory settlement;¹ but he soon came to see that they did open a way for hopeful negotiations, and he wrote to both Mexico and Texas to urge an agreement, and to advocate concessions on either side. Mexico, he thought, had not gone far enough, and its best policy would be to make a complete and full acknowledgment of Texan independence at once.² To Elliot he wrote, expressing his conviction that Santa Anna's offer was made in the full hope "and even expectation" of its being accepted by Texas, that it meant virtual independence, and that a mere "nominal concession" ought not to prevent acceptance by Texas.³ Elliot therefore tried hard to persuade the Texan government to accept these terms. The proposal, he said, amounted to an acknowledgment of virtual independence, and what remained was but the shadow of a name; and as the Mexicans were willing to surrender the substance in exchange for the shadow he thought the Texans ought not to quarrel with their proposal, the acceptance of which would be to the manifest advantage of Texas.⁴ A few weeks later he wrote privately to Jones that he was again informed by Doyle that Santa Anna showed no disposition to yield upon the point of the sovereignty of Mexico being acknowledged by Texas, but thought there would be no difficulty about other points, and on the whole was of opinion that there was a general improvement in that government in the sense of moderation and good-will toward Texas.⁵

As soon as the Texan government received notice that General Woll was authorized to represent Mexico in the matter of an armistice it notified Elliot that the President, "concurring in the views entertained by Her Majesty's Gov. will accede to the proposition made by Gen. Santa Anna, and dispatch Commissioners to treat with Gen. Woll

¹ Aberdeen to Elliot, May 18, 1843; *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 307.

² Aberdeen to Doyle, July 1, 1843; E. D. Adams, 130.

³ Aberdeen to Elliot, June 3, 1843, No. 6; *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 314.

⁴ Elliot to Jones, Aug. 17, 1843; Jones, 246.

⁵ Same to same, Aug. 28, 1843; *ibid.*, 248.

upon the terms and conditions of the Armistice and should these be satisfactorily adjusted, he will forthwith send Commissioners to the City of Mexico."¹ Houston, however, was in no hurry to designate his commissioners, and it was not until nearly the end of September that George W. Hockley and Samuel Williams were appointed. Their instructions stated that they were to endeavor to establish a general armistice between Texas and Mexico, which was to continue during the pendency of negotiations with Mexico for a permanent peace, and for such further period as they could agree upon, requiring due notice to be given by either party disposed to resume hostilities to the other, through the British legation, six months previous to any act of hostility. They were also authorized to agree upon the appointment of commissioners to meet at the city of Mexico to negotiate for the adjustment of all existing difficulties between the two countries and the establishment of a permanent peace. Any agreement made by them was to be subject to ratification by the two countries.² It will be noticed that Santa Anna had asked for commissioners "to treat upon the terms of which Mr. Robinson, one of the late Texian prisoners was the Bearer"; while Houston had sent commissioners who were empowered only to fix the terms of an armistice pending negotiations.

The condition of affairs, therefore, in Mexico and Texas in the early summer of 1843—shortly after the time when Webster resigned the office of Secretary of State of the United States—bore a promising appearance of early peace. Hostilities had been suspended, and it was known that the French and English agents, especially Captain Elliot in Texas, were busy trying to bring the contending parties together, a result which, if it should involve a return of Texas to Mexican allegiance, would assuredly prove very distasteful to President Tyler, although it might be entirely in line with Webster's private views.

¹ Jones to Elliot, July 30, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1114.

² G. W. Hill (Secretary of War) to Hockley and Williams, Sept. 26, 1843; Yoakum, II, 415.

CHAPTER XXII

BRITISH PROPOSALS FOR ABOLISHING SLAVERY IN TEXAS

For several weeks before Webster actually resigned his office as Secretary of State the prospect of a vacancy had been a subject of common gossip in Washington, and the President and his friends had been considering the choice of a successor. John C. Calhoun was the most conspicuous possibility, and many of Tyler's friends thought he ought to be appointed. But it may well be questioned whether Tyler was ever anxious to have Calhoun in his cabinet, and Calhoun himself was at that time unwilling to take the place. His reasons were the same that induced him to resign his seat in the Senate at the close of the session of 1843, namely, that he wished to devote all his time and strength to securing the presidential nomination in 1844. His advice was that Upshur, the Secretary of the Navy, should be promoted. "I had a conversation with him," wrote Calhoun, "a few days before I left Washington, in which the subject of a possible vacancy of the State Department was adverted to, and in which I stated to him in that event, if the office was tendered to him, I was of impression that he ought to accept."¹

Webster, as well as Calhoun, thought Upshur ought to be appointed Secretary of State. The range of choice he regarded as limited and the President could not do better. "Mr. Upshur is an accomplished lawyer, with some experience abroad, of gentlemanly manners and character, and not at all disposed to create or foment foreign difficulties."²

¹ Calhoun to Green, March 19, 1843; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, II, 526. Calhoun left Washington about March 4, 1843.

² Webster to Everett, May 12, 1843; *Webster's Private Corr.*, II, 173. Abel Parker Upshur was a Virginia lawyer, and a man of good abilities