

not be supposed that England meant to limit her designs to the emancipation of the few slaves in Texas; she must have ulterior objects far more important to her, and far more interesting to the United States. These objects could only be the abolition of "domestic slavery throughout the entire continent and islands of America in order to find or create new markets for the products of her home industry, and at the same time destroy all competition with the industry of her colonies." Sugar and cotton could not be produced to any considerable extent on the continent of America by the labor of white men, and of course if slavery could be abolished on the continent the great rivals of her colonial industry would be removed. "No other adequate motive," said Upshur, "can be found for her determined and persevering course in regard to domestic slavery in other countries."

So far as Texas was concerned Upshur discerned further motives.

"Pressed by an unrelenting enemy on her borders, her treasury exhausted, and her credit almost destroyed, Texas is in a condition to need the support of other nations, and to obtain it upon terms of great hardship and many sacrifices to herself. If she should receive no countenance and support from the United States, it is not an extravagant supposition that England may and will reduce her to all the dependence of a colony, without taking upon herself the onerous duties and responsibilities of the mother country. The aid which it is said she now offers toward the abolition of slavery, although probably not the first, is a very important step; it will be followed by others, which will not fail to establish for her a controlling influence for many years to come. The United States have a high interest to counteract this attempt, should it be made."

There was still another point of view, and that was "the establishment, in the very midst of our slave-holding States, of an independent government, forbidding the existence of slavery, and by people born for the most part among us, reared up in our habits, and speaking our language." If Texas were in that condition, her territory would afford a ready refuge for fugitive slaves from Louisiana and Arkansas,

which would lead to constant collisions along the border. The difficulty would be much greater than that which existed within the Union as between slave-holding and non-slave-holding states. Nor was there any just analogy between Texas and Canada. Canada could not be reached by land without passing through the free states of the Union, and was therefore only "the secondary recipient of the fugitive slave."

For these reasons Upshur commended the subject to Murphy's most vigilant care. "Few calamities could befall this country more to be deplored than the establishment of a predominant British influence and the abolition of domestic slavery in Texas."<sup>1</sup>

It is not easy at this day to understand or to judge impartially the mental attitude of men like Tyler and Upshur when dealing with questions relating to the existence of slavery. Both of these men, and a large proportion of those by whom they were surrounded in the cabinet and in Congress, were slave-owners, as their fathers had been before them for many generations. Many of them were men of education, usually with strong religious beliefs, charitable and well-meaning. They habitually lived for a considerable time in each year an isolated life, away from large affairs, and the currents of trade and of national and international opinion. It was only while in Washington that they experienced the bracing contact with other minds. At home the men who were apt to represent the South in the cabinet and in Congress were generally the most conspicuous personages and the oracles of their neighborhood. They lived much in the past, their ideas of politics and history were those in vogue shortly after the adoption of the federal Constitution, and they were, as a class, intensely conservative.

Conscious of good intentions themselves, and knowing or believing that their own slaves were treated with kindness and cared for in sickness and old age, they were slow to believe that other owners were less humane or that there

<sup>1</sup> Upshur to Murphy, Aug. 8, 1843; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 18-22.

was any real hardship in the lot of the Southern negroes. As time went by their opinions on the subject of slavery had been slowly modified. Their fathers had looked upon the institution as a national misfortune; but throughout the South many of the public men of Tyler's time had gradually come to persuade themselves that slavery was so far from being an evil that it was in reality a great blessing to the slaves themselves, as well as to the white people of the South.

The economic and social status of the whole South rested upon the existence of slavery. The older of these states had been developed for two centuries, and their industries had been carried forward by the use of slave labor. It was hard for men brought up in the midst of such conditions to see how a community could change habits which were so deeply rooted in custom; and it was indeed generally believed (as Upshur said) that the greater part of the agriculture of the South was impossible except by the use of negroes, who could thrive in a climate which was thought to be deadly to white men. It was, moreover, the honest conviction of most people at the South that free negroes were shiftless and lazy, and that they never could be induced to work.

No one who had any responsibility for the administration of the American government ever failed to perceive the enormous difficulties in the way of abolishing slavery. Northern statesmen, even those most hostile to the institution, offered no solution of the problem; and as time went on they came more and more strongly to believe in the policy of limiting the extension of slavery, hoping that if the evil were confined it might at some time cure itself.

The people of the South were of course forced into looking at the difficulties of emancipation from a closer and more personal stand-point than that which was occupied by people in the North. The whole South was possessed by a perfectly genuine, though very likely an exaggerated, dread of negro risings, and almost every provision of local statutes dealing with the status of slaves was based upon the notion of forestalling what Southern legislators looked upon, not

without some justification, as a possible and an immeasurable calamity.

As the summer of 1843 passed by the American administration became more and more nervous on the subject of British interference—a menace of which the Texan agents made good use. On August 10 Van Zandt had an interview with Upshur on the subject, and in a private letter to the Texan Secretary of State wrote that he thought Upshur was disposed “to act up to my most sanguine expectations in relation to Texas”; that he was fully alive to the important bearing which slavery in Texas had upon the United States; and that he had expressed alarm lest England was attempting to exercise some undue influence upon Texan affairs. Van Zandt said he had replied that England had always professed and evinced a great desire to secure peace, but if she did intend or was actually trying to obtain an undue influence over Texas the best way to counteract her efforts was for the United States “to act promptly and efficiently.” Upshur replied that nothing should be lacking on his part to secure peace for Texas and to advance its prosperity, that he conceived the interests of the two countries to be closely connected, and that he could best serve the interests of the United States by promoting those of Texas. Van Zandt, however, pointed out in writing to Anson Jones that the other branches of the government, and especially the Senate, were not disposed “to aid Mr. Tyler in his views upon any important national question; therefore, his efforts, no odds how laudable they may be, will meet with more or less opposition.”<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks after this conversation between Upshur and Van Zandt strong confirmation was received of the current reports as to British efforts to bring about emancipation in Texas. Lord Brougham had asked a question in Parliament about negotiations with Texas and Mexico. He looked forward, he declared—

“most anxiously to the abolition of slavery in Texas, as he was convinced that it would ultimately end in the abolition of slavery through—

<sup>1</sup> Van Zandt to Jones, Aug. 12, 1843; Jones, 244.

out the whole of America. He knew that the Texians would do much, as regarded the abolition of slavery, if Mexico could be induced to recognize her independence. If, therefore, by our good offices, we could get the Mexican government to acknowledge the independence of Texas, he would suggest a hope that it might terminate in the abolition of slavery in Texas, and ultimately the whole of the southern states of America."

Aberdeen had replied that no one was more anxious than himself to see the abolition of slavery in Texas, and that though he must decline to produce papers or give further information it did not arise from indifference, but from quite a contrary reason; "but he could assure his noble Friend that, by means of urging the negotiations, as well as by every other means in their power, Her Majesty's ministers would press this matter."<sup>1</sup>

On receiving the newspaper reports of Aberdeen's remarks, Upshur on September 22, 1843, sent confidential instructions to Murphy, expressing the regret of the American government that there should be any misunderstanding in Texas as to the feelings of the United States toward that country, which it had every motive to encourage and aid in all honorable courses. The government of the United States had every desire to come to the aid of Texas, although how far it would be supported by the people was regarded as somewhat doubtful. "There is no reason to fear that there will be any difference of opinion among the people of the slave-holding States, and there is a large number in the non-slave-holding States with views sufficiently liberal to embrace a policy absolutely necessary for the salvation of the South, although in some respects objectionable to themselves." In fact, said Upshur, the North had a much deeper interest in this matter than the South; for the policy which the South would pursue would simply give them security and no other advantage whatever. On the contrary, it would give them an agricultural competitor. The North, however, would be helped by acquiring a new market for its manufactures and a cheapening of the price of cotton.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, *Debates*, 3d ser., LXXI, 918.

It was hoped that the North would be soon convinced of this, and no effort would be spared to lay the truth before them. Texas had every motive to hold on to her present position, to yield nothing to British counsels or British influence. She might rest assured that the moment she committed herself to British protection she would be the lamb in the embrace of the wolf. Great Britain was already claiming an "ascendancy" in the Gulf of Mexico, and Murphy was urged to exercise "the most untiring vigilance of the movements of the British Government."<sup>1</sup>

Upshur also wrote at great length to Everett, in London, to the effect that the movements of Great Britain in respect to slavery demanded the serious attention of the American government, and he repeated and enlarged upon the theme developed in the instructions to Murphy, of the dangers that would be involved in the abolition of slavery in Texas.<sup>2</sup> Everett could not reply at once, for Aberdeen was in the country and Ashbel Smith in Paris; but as soon as practicable he sent long accounts of the information he had gathered from both sources as to the Stephen Pearl Andrews incident of the previous summer, and as to the policy of the British government. He particularly laid stress on Smith's assertion that no proposition had been made to Texas in which abolition was mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

But by the time Everett's reply was received President Tyler had fully committed himself to the policy of annexing Texas—a policy he had been considering for months. He had even discussed it with the Texan chargé d'affaires as early as the month of December, 1842. At that time the Whig Congress was certain to oppose anything Tyler suggested; but the elections of November, 1842, had resulted in the choice of a Democratic House of Representatives,

<sup>1</sup> Upshur to Murphy, Sept. 22, 1843; *State Dept. MSS.* and see extracts in H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 25.

<sup>2</sup> Upshur to Everett, Sept. 28, 1843; *ibid.*, 27-37.

<sup>3</sup> Everett to Upshur, Nov. 3 and 16, 1843; *ibid.*, 38, 40. The statements made by Aberdeen were verbal. He assured Everett that he had at once rejected the proposal of a loan made by the Tappan committee. Smith's statements were contained in a private letter from Paris.—(Smith to Everett, Oct. 31, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 1145.)

and he thought the next Congress might prove favorable to annexation. Van Zandt, in due course, reported this conversation to his own government, and expressed the opinion that the time would soon come when it would be possible to conclude a treaty of annexation, and he again said that if this was desired by the government of Texas he ought to be furnished with full powers for that specific purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Van Zandt's letter must have reached Texas about the beginning of February, 1843, and the prospect that annexation might now be carried through was well received by Houston and some of his friends. Houston at that time thought the prospect of an early annexation was hopeful. "I find," he wrote, "as news reaches me both from the United States and Texas, that the subject of annexation is one that has claimed much attention, and is well received";<sup>2</sup> but the Texan government, with obvious good sense, declined to ask for annexation upon any such shadowy assurances of support in Congress as Van Zandt had up to this time been able to secure from President Tyler. Their policy was to "suffer matters to glide along quietly until the U States Govt decides upon the policy of annexation";<sup>3</sup> and Van Zandt was instructed that the rejection by the United States of the former proposals for annexation had placed Texas in an attitude which would render it improper for her to renew the proposition. He was, however, authorized to say verbally that before Texas could take any action on the subject it would be necessary for the United States government "to take some step in the matter of so decided a character as would open wide the door of negotiation to Texas," in which event Van Zandt would be authorized "to make a treaty of annexation."<sup>4</sup> But Tyler was not yet ready to take a decided step toward annexation, and in July the Texan government, being then engaged in the preliminary negotiations for an armistice under the shadow of the Robinson proposals, instructed Van Zandt, in sub-

<sup>1</sup> Van Zandt to Terrell, Dec. 23, 1842; *ibid.*, I, 633.

<sup>2</sup> Houston to Eve, Feb. 17, 1843; *ibid.*, II, 128.

<sup>3</sup> Waples to Reily, May 12, 1842; *ibid.*, I, 559.

<sup>4</sup> Jones to Van Zandt, Feb. 10, 1843; *ibid.*, II, 123.

stance, that his authority to give verbal assurances of a readiness to treat of annexation were withdrawn; that it was thought best to postpone the subject pending the settlement of difficulties with Mexico; and that if the independence of Texas should be acknowledged by that power the question of annexation would be much simplified.<sup>1</sup>

While Texas thus remained to all appearances cool and indifferent, the American administration was becoming eager in pursuit. All through August and September of the year 1843 Upshur was in a state of nervous excitement over the fear that British intrigues would result in the abolition of slavery in Texas. Cumulative evidence of this design kept arriving at the State Department, and he must have repeatedly importuned the President to take the first step in a negotiation which, if successful, would put an end forever to the possibility of British success in whatever objects it was striving for in Texas. At length the President gave way. Speaking of Upshur in an address delivered in 1858, Tyler said:

"I remember how highly gratified he was when, after receiving voluminous dispatches from abroad, mostly bearing on the matter, I announced to him my purpose to offer annexation to Texas in the form of a treaty, and authorized him at once, and without delay, to communicate the fact to Mr. Van Zandt, the accomplished minister from that republic."<sup>2</sup>

It was on the twenty-second of September that Upshur instructed Murphy to use untiring vigilance in watching British movements, and on the eighteenth that he informed Van Zandt of the change in the attitude of the American government. They now contemplated, he said, early action, and he desired Van Zandt to communicate this fact to the Texan authorities, so that, if they still desired to conclude a treaty of annexation, their representative in Washington might be

<sup>1</sup> Same to same, July 6, 1843; *ibid.*, 195. These instructions were dated on the day Murphy was received as United States chargé, when he was writing of mysterious negotiations going on which he could not fathom, and which might be of vast consequence to his government.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II, 389.

furnished with the necessary powers to act. Upshur also went on to say that such a treaty was "the great measure of the administration here," and that he believed it might be safely submitted to the next Senate. He also explained the grounds of his belief, "which were drawn from the views of various correspondents, and the manifestations of public sentiment in different parts of the country." Van Zandt said he told Upshur he doubted whether the power to negotiate would be given him, unless the proposition for annexation was positively made by the United States; to which Upshur replied that he could not then make a definite proposal, and thought it would not be proper to make it unless Van Zandt had the necessary powers—all of which the latter reported to his government, with a strong expression of his own opinion in favor of annexation.<sup>1</sup>

Four weeks later, and without waiting to receive a reply to his verbal inquiry, Upshur addressed a note to Van Zandt in which he stated that recent occurrences in Europe had imparted a fresh interest to the subject of annexation, and although he could not offer any positive assurance that the measure would be "acceptable to all branches of this government," the administration would present it in the strongest manner to the consideration of Congress. He would therefore be prepared to enter upon negotiations for a treaty of annexation whenever Van Zandt was furnished with proper powers.<sup>2</sup> The "recent occurrences in Europe" to which Upshur referred were, of course, the dealings of Lord Aberdeen with the abolitionists in reference to slavery in Texas, the first news of which had reached the State Department in August. But what had at last impelled him to put his proposals in writing, weeks after he had been informed of the attitude of the British government, could only have been the threatening and warlike tone adopted by Mexico on the subject of annexation.<sup>3</sup>

The willingness of Texas to enter upon negotiations for

<sup>1</sup> Van Zandt to Jones, Sept. 18, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 207-210.

<sup>2</sup> Upshur to Van Zandt, Oct. 16, 1843; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 37.

<sup>3</sup> See Sen. Doc. 341, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 89-94.

annexation seems to have been taken for granted by the American administration. No doubt a majority of the people of Texas would have welcomed the project with enthusiasm. But the Texan government was by no means committed to it, and approached the subject with a great deal of caution. In the first place, the bugbear of British interference with slavery did not excite much alarm in Texas. "The subject," says Jones, "was never once so much as mentioned or alluded to by the British minister to the government of Texas, except to disclaim in the most emphatic terms any intention on the part of England ever to interfere with it here."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Texan government was very much afraid that if a treaty of annexation were concluded, Mexico might terminate the existing armistice, break off negotiations for peace, and again threaten, or even commence, hostilities against Texas; and that at the same time the British and the French governments, which had been instrumental in obtaining the cessation of hostilities, might cease their efforts at mediation, or possibly throw their influence into the Mexican scale.

Van Zandt was accordingly instructed on December 13 to notify the American government that Texas would not enter into the proposed negotiation. Two reasons were given. In the first place, it was thought that—

"in the present state of our foreign relations, it would not be politic to abandon the expectations which now exist of a speedy settlement of our difficulties with Mexico, through the good offices of other powers for the very uncertain prospect of annexation to the United States however desirable that event, if it could be consummated, might be. Were Texas to agree to a treaty of annexation, the good offices of these powers would it is believed be immediately withdrawn, and were the Treaty then to Fail of ratification by the Senate of the United States, Texas would be placed in a much worse situation than she is at present."

In the second place, the Texan government, though duly sensible of the friendly feeling evinced by the President of the United States in the offer to conclude a treaty, was of

<sup>1</sup> Jones, 82.

opinion that "its approval by other branches of that government" would at least be very uncertain.

"At this particular time, therefore, and until such an expression of their opinion can be obtained as would render this measure certain of success the President deems it most proper and most advantageous to the interests of this country, to decline the proposition for concluding a treaty."<sup>1</sup>

Other people held the same opinion as President Houston. Thus General Henderson, who had been the first representative of Texas abroad, and had been for a time Secretary of State, protested strongly to Anson Jones, the then Secretary, against a premature attempt to make a treaty.

"When in the United States lately," Henderson wrote, "I received a letter from Van Zandt in which he expressed a strong hope of being able to consummate a treaty of annexation. I took the liberty to suggest the impropriety of making such a treaty unless he was certain of its ratification by the United States Senate. I am extremely anxious to see such a thing take place; but it does seem to me that Texas would be placed in an extremely awkward situation in regard to her intercourse, should the treaty be signed, and afterwards rejected by the United States."<sup>2</sup>

Upon this letter the gratified Jones indorsed the remark: "A shrewd and sensible letter this, and hits the nail on the head every time."

The Texan Congress met on December 4, 1843, three weeks after the date of the instructions to Van Zandt not to enter into negotiations, and in his annual message President Houston was silent on the subject of negotiations with the United States, but referred gratefully to the kind offices of the foreign governments which had contributed toward bringing about negotiations with Mexico for an armistice. Houston personally had been very much disturbed by the American offer, and told Elliot that he would never consent to a treaty of annexation, provided the independence of Texas were recognized by Mexico.<sup>3</sup> And in a public speech he had accused

<sup>1</sup> Jones to Van Zandt, Dec. 13, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 232-233.

<sup>2</sup> Henderson to Jones, Dec. 20, 1843; Jones, 278.

<sup>3</sup> Elliot to Aberdeen, Oct. 31, 1843; E. D. Adams, 151.

the United States of hostility to the interests of Texas, and held up Great Britain as her true friend.<sup>1</sup> It seems likely, however, that Houston and his cabinet very soon learned from conversations with members of Congress how strong the public opinion in favor of annexation really was.

The Texan representatives in the United States were also urging the policy of entering upon negotiations. "I hope," wrote Van Zandt, "that you will accept annexation. It will be the best move we can make."<sup>2</sup> A Texan naval officer who had been in the United States wrote that he had seen President Tyler and Mr. Upshur, and was "sorry to find the subject of annexation suspended by us. Mr. Upshur is a great advocate of this Measure."<sup>3</sup>

Van Zandt was also busy in trying to remove one, at least, of the obstacles which stood in the way of the Texan government. As he saw it, their chief objection to negotiations for annexation lay in their fear of an attack from Mexico; and therefore, entirely without instructions, he addressed a note to Upshur inquiring whether the President of the United States, after the signing of a treaty and before its ratification, would "in case Texas should desire it, or with her consent, order such number of the military and naval forces of the United States to such necessary points or places upon the territory or borders of Texas or the Gulf of Mexico, as shall be sufficient to protect her against foreign aggression."<sup>4</sup>

To this inquiry no written answer was returned at that time, but Van Zandt reported that he was verbally authorized by the Secretary of State, "who speaks by the authority of the President of the United States," to say to the Texan authorities—

<sup>1</sup> Murphy to Upshur, Dec. 5, 1843; *State Dept. MSS.* Enclosed with this despatch were editorials from Texan newspapers criticising Houston's pro-British tendencies. On Dec. 26 Murphy wrote that the Congress was very hostile to Houston.

<sup>2</sup> Van Zandt to Jones, Oct. 22, 1843; Jones, 260.

<sup>3</sup> Tod to Jones, Oct. 25, 1843; *ibid.*, 261. Reference may also be made to Van Zandt's official despatches of Nov. 4 and 30, 1843; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 224, 228.

<sup>4</sup> Van Zandt to Upshur, Jan. 17, 1844; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 89.

"that the moment a treaty of annexation shall be signed a large naval force will be assembled in the Gulf of Mexico, upon the coast of Texas, and that a sufficient number of the Military force will be ordered to rendezvous upon the borders of Texas, ready to act as circumstances may require; and that these assurances will be officially given preliminary to the signing of the treaty, if desired by the Government of Texas; and that this Government will say to Mexico that she must in no wise disturb or molest Texas."<sup>1</sup>

In the same despatch in which Van Zandt reported these comforting assurances he also stated that he had taken the responsibility of withholding from the American government the fact that Texas refused to negotiate, because he had become convinced that there was now a "confident prospect" of a treaty being consented to by the Senate. This opinion was based chiefly on the impression that the measure would be regarded as a matter of national importance, "alike interesting to the whole Union." The general opinion in Washington was that Texas must either be annexed to the United States or become a dependency of Great Britain.

"This view of the case has had an important influence upon many of the Senators of the non-slaveholding states. Were the question deprived of this feature I should despair of its success. . . . I feel confident that we may rely upon the entire vote of the south and west, regardless of party, while at the north we may calculate on the whole democratic vote, and many say Mr. Tallmadge of the Whig party, though the latter may be considered doubtful."

At about the time that Van Zandt was thus reporting on affairs in Washington, Upshur was writing another long and confidential letter to the American chargé in Texas, dealing with the general subject of annexation. "You are probably not aware," he said, "that a proposition has been made to the Texan government for the annexation of that country to the United States. This, I learn from the Texan chargé, has been for the present declined." But Upshur expressed himself as not disappointed, for he thought it not surprising

<sup>1</sup> Van Zandt to Jones, Jan. 20, 1844; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 239-243.

that that government should hesitate "in the present state of its interest" to make any further movement toward annexation. So long as the success of the measure in the American Congress was doubtful he considered it only natural that Texas should be disinclined to hazard the friendship of other powers by an unsuccessful appeal to the United States. At the same time he had no doubt as to the unanimous wishes of the people of Texas.

Upon the action of the American Congress Upshur did not profess to speak with absolute certainty, although he said he felt "a degree of confidence in regard to it which is little short of absolute certainty."

"The more the subject is discussed among our statesmen, the more clearly does it appear that the interest of both countries absolutely requires that they should be united. When the measure was first suggested, although the entire South was in favor of it, as they still are, it found few friends among the statesmen of the other States. Now, the North, to a great extent, are not only favorable to, but anxious for it; and every day increases the popularity of the measure among those who originally opposed it. Measures have been taken to ascertain the opinions and views of Senators upon the subject, and it is found that a clear constitutional majority of two-thirds are in favor of the measure. This I learn from sources which do not leave the matter doubtful; and I have reason to know that President Houston himself has received the same information from sources which will command his respect. There is not, in my opinion, the slightest doubt of the ratification of a treaty of annexation, should Texas agree to make one."

As to the importance of the measure, Upshur professed "a deep and solemn conviction" that it involved the destinies of both Texas and the United States "to a fearful extent." In the first place, he believed that if Texas made concessions to England it would lead to irritation between the United States, on the one hand, and Texas and Great Britain, on the other. Texas would be populated by emigrants from Europe, and the country would soon be subject to the control of a population who were anxious to abolish slavery. To this England would stimulate them, and would

furnish the means of accomplishing it. With such causes at work war between the United States and Texas would be inevitable.

"England will be a party to it, from necessity, if not from choice; and the other great powers of the world will not be idle spectators of a contest involving such momentous results. I think it almost certain that the peace of the civilized world, the stability of long established institutions, and the destinies of millions, both in Europe and America, hang on the decision which Texas shall now pronounce."<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, was the attitude of the governments of the United States and Texas in the middle of January, 1844. Tyler and his Secretary of State were eager and hopeful for the success of the project, and were professing—probably quite sincerely—the belief that a failure to carry it forward might result in the most serious calamities. On the other side were Houston and his Secretary of State, urged on by a nearly unanimous population, but held back for the time being by the fear that the making of a treaty might be the signal for an actual invasion at last by the Mexican forces.

<sup>1</sup> Upshur to Murphy, Jan. 16, 1844; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 43-48. Italics in original.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### TYLER'S TREATY OF ANNEXATION

GENERAL ALMONTE, the Mexican minister in Washington, arriving at his post late in the year 1842, lent an attentive ear to all the gossip that floated about the capital in reference to Texan affairs. All that he learned led him to urge again and again upon his government the importance of speedy military action to reconquer Texas. The newspapers, he wrote, were full of reports that France, England, and the United States had instructed their ministers to offer mediation. He did not think that much attention should be paid to these proposals, for this was the last resort of the demoralized Texans. It was essential, in his judgment, not to let this opportunity of recovering Texas escape, for if it was not improved it never would recur again.<sup>1</sup> A little later he wrote that public opinion in the United States with respect to Texas had never been more favorable for Mexico. He hoped to obtain from the President a proclamation of neutrality, which would serve to discourage emigration to Texas, and would give Mexico the right to treat "with rigor" those who might be found, in spite of warnings, within the revolted territory.<sup>2</sup> Six weeks afterward he was less hopeful. Public opinion, he reported, was still favorable to Mexico, but he could not be certain how long it would so continue if unfortunately the campaign against Texas was not begun in March or April. Up to the time of writing no proposition for the admission of Texas to the Union had been made, but he did not doubt that at the next session of Congress, in December, 1843, this would be one of the principal matters under discussion. By that

<sup>1</sup> Almonte to Minister of Relations, Nov. 15, 1842; *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico, MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Same to same, Dec. 12, 1842; *ibid.*