

Texas, but in a conversation with Upshur on various matters the latter had alluded to the desire of his government to acquire the territory of Texas from Mexico by means of purchase. Upon this point Almonte wrote home asking for further instructions, and he expressed the opinion that if the campaign against Texas could not soon be begun it might perhaps be desirable to gain time by allowing the American government to entertain some hope that Mexico might be willing to negotiate on the subject.¹

But before any instructions could be received Almonte had another interview with Upshur, who unreservedly explained his fears that Great Britain might exercise an influence over Texas deeply prejudicial to the interests and tranquillity of the United States. As the sole means of avoiding this evil, he proposed that Mexico should cede Texas to the United States in consideration of adequate compensation. After enlarging further upon the dangers of British interference in Texas, Upshur—

“concluded by saying that for all these reasons the government of the United States desired to enter upon negotiations with the government of Mexico for the acquisition of Texas; but if it was unsuccessful in such negotiations, he would infinitely prefer to see Texas again in the possession of the Mexicans than under the influence of the British government, as the Mexicans were entirely unlike the Anglo-Americans, their origin, their language, their religion, their customs, etc., being totally different and they could not therefore inspire the same fear as the English, who had so many points of resemblance with the inhabitants of that country, who spoke the same language, and who could so easily mingle with them.

“He then added that he was positive that at least three-fourths of the inhabitants of Texas desired to be annexed to the United States; but that it would not be easy to foresee what course of conduct the Texan Congress might follow in this affair. For his part he wished to remove all cause of annoyance or conflict with Mexico, and he hoped our government would not consider the annexation of Texas to the United States as equivalent to a declaration of war on their part without first endeavoring to arrive at a full explanation.

“He next undertook to demonstrate the advantages which in his opinion would result to Mexico from the sale of Texas. He said that

¹ Same to same, Jan. 25, 1844; *ibid.*

by this means the republic would be spared sacrifices of men and money; that instead of laying out its treasure to recover a country which would always be a source of expense, it would be better to receive in exchange a large sum which might be used for paying off a part of the foreign debt, or for making internal improvements in the country; that in that event the honor of Mexican arms would not run the risk of being exposed to the hazard of war; and that the honor of the nation would not suffer by treating, not with Texas, but with the government of the United States, who would undertake to make the Texans agree to abide by whatever the two governments might decide on.”

Almonte thereupon asked whether the Secretary of State did not think that England would object, even if Mexico should be willing to enter upon the proposed negotiation. Upshur replied that whatever English opinion might be, the government of the United States was resolved, in case Mexico should agree to its proposition, to go to war with Great Britain if necessary.

This ended the conversation, Almonte promising to submit the matter to his government, but he remarked to Upshur that he hoped that before a negotiation was really in train the Mexican troops would have reached at least the centre of Texas, and thus put an end to the question. To his own government he expressed the opinion that Upshur's proposition should not be lightly dismissed, for two reasons. The first, that the opening of a negotiation would show definitely that the United States *did* recognize Mexican rights over Texas, notwithstanding their declaration to the contrary; and the second, because the United States would make no attempt to take the territory by force so long as it hoped to gain it by negotiation. He thought the reasons why the American government wished to negotiate were that it expected Congress would agree to admit Texas, and that it was feared a war with Mexico might follow which would bring about a separation between the Northern and Southern states. He thought that they also considered it “cheaper to negotiate than to fight for the acquisition of Texas.”¹

¹ Same to same, Feb. 17, 1844; *ibid.*

Such was the condition of the negotiation for annexation when Henderson left Texas. He reached Washington on March 29, 1844. When he arrived at the seat of government Upshur was no longer alive.

On February 28 a number of people had been invited by the Secretary of the Navy to visit the new United States man-of-war *Princeton*, a vessel of only about six hundred tons, but which was remarkable as being the first naval vessel in any country that used a screw-propeller. She was designed and built by Ericsson, under the supervision of Captain Robert F. Stockton, U. S. N., and was justly regarded with great curiosity as a promising experiment. Reporting upon her when she was first ready for sea, Captain Stockton described her advantages as follows:

"The advantages of the *Princeton* over both sailing-ships and steamers propelled in the usual way are great and obvious. . . . Making no noise, smoke, or agitation of the water, (and, if she chooses, showing no sail,) she can surprise an enemy. She can at pleasure take her own position and her own distance from the enemy. Her engines and water wheel being below the surface of the water, safe from an enemy's shot, she is in no danger of being disabled, even if her masts should be destroyed. . . . The *Princeton* is armed with two long 225-pound wrought-iron guns and 12 42-pound carronades, all of which may be used at once on either side of the ship. She can consequently throw a greater weight of metal at one broadside than most frigates. The big guns of the *Princeton* can be fired with an effect terrific and almost incredible, and with a certainty heretofore unknown."

The guns were indeed quite as much of a novelty as any part of the ship. They were known by the significant names of the *Oregon* and the *Peacemaker*, and they had been fired a number of times with what were then considered the enormous charges of from twenty-five to fifty pounds of powder.¹

After lunch on board, and while the ship was returning to an anchorage near Washington, one of the pivot guns which had already been fired several times exploded, kill-

¹ *Life of Commodore Stockton*, 82. See also Church's *Life of John Ericsson*, I, 117-139.

ing five persons and wounding more or less severely many others. Among those killed was the Secretary of State.

President Tyler's thoughts were now almost inevitably turned to John C. Calhoun as Upshur's successor, and as the man of all others to carry through the negotiation with Texas. For some years Calhoun had been fully committed to the policy of annexation. When the question of the recognition of Texas first came up in the Senate in 1836, he had declared that he was not only ready to recognize her independence, but to vote for her admission to the Union. "There were powerful reasons why Texas should be a part of this Union. The Southern States owning a slave population, were deeply interested in preventing that country from having the power to annoy them, and the navigating and manufacturing interests of the North and East were equally interested in making it a part of this Union."¹ Annexation he thought was a question of life and death, and he believed that opposition to it at the North was due to the fact that the people there had not sufficiently weighed the consequences of British policy, or the obligation of all sections to defend the South from the effects of British greed.

"There is not a vacant spot left on the Globe," he wrote to a friend concerning Texas, "not excepting Cuba, to be seized by her, so well calculated to further the boundless schemes of her ambition and cupidity. If we should permit her to seize on it we shall deserve the execration of posterity."²

On the other hand, there were reasons why Calhoun should not be appointed, which were bound to weigh seriously with the President. The most obvious was the fact that he had long been talked of as a presidential possibility, and had quite openly announced his candidacy. It was to be expected that he would inevitably use his opportunities in the State Department as a means of advancing his political fortunes, and that he rather than Tyler (who had ambitions of succeeding himself in the presidency) would profit by

¹ *Debates in Congress*, XII, 1531.

² Calhoun to Wharton, May 28, 1844; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, II, 594.

success in foreign negotiations. Another reason, not to be avowed, but perhaps none the less potent on that account, was the uneasy feeling which Tyler must have entertained at the thought of having a stronger intellect and a more powerful will closely associated with him in the cabinet. But the immediate danger which the President apprehended from Calhoun's presence in the cabinet was the effect to be produced upon the Senate. He feared, and was justified in fearing, that senators who otherwise might have voted for annexation, would oppose it if it were known as Calhoun's measure.¹

But Tyler's hand was in some sense forced. Wise of Virginia, who was one of Tyler's closest friends, gave Senator McDuffie of South Carolina to understand that he had the President's authority for saying that Calhoun would be appointed if he would accept the place. Tyler feared that if he disavowed Wise it would make matters worse, would offend McDuffie, and would thus jeopardize the success of the treaty in the Senate; and after some hours of hesitation he decided to ratify Wise's unauthorized statement, and to invite Calhoun to take up the work of the State Department.²

McDuffie wrote to Calhoun that he ought not to hesitate in accepting, and that this was the decided opinion of all his friends.

"I mention to you in confidence that the Texas question is in such a state that in ten days after your arrival the Treaty of annexation would be signed, and from poor Upshur's account 40 senators would vote for it. The President says he has hopes of the acquiescence of Mexico. It is a great occasion involving the peace of the country and the salvation of the South, and your friends here have ventured to say for you, that no party or personal considerations would prevent you from meeting the crisis."³

¹ Tyler was in hopes that a treaty could be signed before Calhoun could get to Washington. "The President stated that he was very desirous to have the treaty concluded at once and by Mr. Nelson the Attorney-General, who is Secretary of State *ad interim*, that he preferred he should do it instead of the gentleman to whom he intended to offer the permanent appointment."—(Van Zandt to Jones, March 5, 1844; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 262.)

² *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II, 294.

³ McDuffie to Calhoun, March 5, 1844; *Amer. Hist. Assn. Rep.* 1899, II, 934.

The President himself wrote to Calhoun that after a conversation with McDuffie and Holmes of South Carolina, and "in full view of the important negotiation now pending between us and foreign Governments," he had sent his name to the Senate. The annexation of Texas and the settlement of the Oregon question were the great ends to be accomplished. The first was in the act of completion, and would admit of no delay. The last had but barely been opened.¹

Calhoun had sent in his resignation from the Senate at the close of the short session of Congress in March, 1843, and had been devoting himself since that time with zeal and energy to securing a nomination for the presidency in 1844. Living upon his farm in South Carolina, he carried on an extensive correspondence with his friends, but in spite of that sort of encouragement which is never wanting to conspicuous candidates, he had become convinced very early in 1844 that his chances for that year at least were hopeless, and he had caused his withdrawal from the contest to be announced. The whole machinery of the Democratic party had in fact been carefully set in motion to effect the renomination of Van Buren, and it was the confident expectation of both parties that Van Buren would succeed.

At the time of his appointment as Secretary of State Calhoun was fifty-seven years old, and not in very vigorous health. He was a man in whom the powers of intellect had always prevailed at the expense of good judgment. His contemporaries described him as a thinking machine, and the cold and logical precision of his arguments seem to have produced an impression on the men of his day which it is not easy now to realize. Starting from premises which he accepted as accurate, he often reached conclusions which seemed to other minds absurd, and which might have seemed absurd to him also if he had lived a life that brought him into more active contact with affairs. Another man would have concluded that there was something wrong with either his premises or his argument; but Calhoun remained serene in the face of his absurdities. As one result of his mental

¹ Tyler to Calhoun, March 6, 1844; *ibid.*, 938.

isolation, he had no party back of him, and but little influence with the people outside his own state, although at the same time his striking abilities and his high character caused him to be regarded with respect throughout the country.

Calhoun undertook the duty of negotiating for the acquisition of Texas, and for the settlement of the outstanding controversy with Great Britain with apparent reluctance. He would do so, he said, only from a sense of duty, and he asked whether it might not be possible for him to be appointed as a special plenipotentiary to take charge of the two pending negotiations, and to let a Secretary of State be appointed to manage the other affairs of the department; but upon this suggestion he did not insist.¹

Arriving in Washington on March 31, 1844, he lost no time in taking up the business of the treaty with the representatives of Texas, Mexico, and Great Britain. After some conversations with Van Zandt and Henderson, Almonte was sent for to come to the State Department, and he was there informed that a treaty of annexation was in contemplation, but that the American government was anxious to avoid any ill-feeling or controversy with Mexico. Calhoun said he would be pleased if Almonte could indicate some measure by which annexation could be accomplished without a breach with Mexico; to which Almonte replied that war would be inevitable if annexation were carried into effect without the consent of Mexico. Calhoun suggested the insertion of a clause in the proposed treaty, under which a certain sum of money should be provided as compensation. He said he had been speaking upon this subject with the Texan agents, and asked Almonte's opinion on that point. Almonte professed himself not authorized to give any opinion, and the only thing he could say was that he would have to ask for his passports as soon as he knew that any such treaty had been approved by the Senate. All that the American government, in his opinion, could do was to propose to Mexico the purchase of Texas. Whether it

¹ *Ibid.*, 575.

would be agreed to or not, he did not know. Such a proposal, he believed, would not offend Mexico, especially if France and England would agree with the United States and Mexico upon a guarantee that the American government would not in any case go beyond limits which might be fixed. Calhoun observed that Pakenham had already proposed to the American government to unite with the British government in urging upon Mexico the recognition of the independence of Texas, and that they should guarantee its independence; but that the American government had not agreed to co-operate in this project.

In reporting this conversation, Almonte observed that he did not believe Pakenham would approve of a sale of Texas; and he therefore thought it very probable that the annexation treaty would go to the Senate in the form which the Secretary of State had indicated. He hoped, however, that it might be possible to get a proposition in writing for the purchase of Texas, and he would use it to postpone action by the Senate until after the next presidential election. In the meantime, Mexico might recover Texas by force of arms.¹

So far as the Texan representatives were concerned, the negotiation was taken up exactly where it was at the time of Upshur's death, with one extremely important exception. Nelson, the Attorney-General, had been appointed to take charge of the State Department *ad interim*, and in that capacity had replied to Murphy's despatch of February 15, 1844. Under date of March 11, 1844, Nelson expressed the President's satisfaction with Murphy's general attitude, but sharply disapproved the pledges given for the use of the army and navy of the United States.

"The employment of the army or navy against a foreign power, with which the United States are at peace, is not within the competency of the President; and whilst he is not indisposed, as a measure of prudent precaution, and as preliminary to the proposed negotiation, to concentrate in the Gulf of Mexico, and on the southern borders of the United States, a naval and military force to be directed to the defence of the inhabitants and territory of Texas at a proper time, he

¹ Almonte to Minister of Relations, April 9, 1844; *Sec. de Rel. Ext. MSS.*

cannot permit the authorities of that Government or yourself to labor under the misapprehension that he has power to employ them at the period indicated by your stipulations."¹

How far Nelson's statement of the President's constitutional powers was made known to the Texan plenipotentiaries does not clearly appear. They had been required by their instructions to obtain "as full a guarantee as possible" of protection against Mexico, but they probably persuaded themselves that it was not necessary to be too exacting in this regard. Calhoun was evidently ready to go far in order to satisfy them, and he accordingly wrote a formal reply to the note of January 17, 1844, in which Van Zandt had inquired whether the President of the United States would use the military and naval forces to protect Texas "against foreign aggression."

Calhoun's written reply stated that a strong naval force had been ordered to concentrate in the Gulf of Mexico, "to meet any emergency," and that similar orders had been issued to the military forces to march to the southwestern frontier for the same purpose.

"Should the exigency arise," he added, "to which you refer in your note to Mr. Upshur, I am further directed by the President to say, that, during the pendency of the treaty of annexation, *he would deem it his duty to use all the means placed within his power by the constitution to protect Texas from all foreign invasion.*"²

By way of a supplement to this note, Calhoun stated verbally that in case of any serious demonstration by water Commodore Conner, commanding the naval force, would inform the Mexican commander that any attack on Texas would be considered a hostile act, which the Executive would feel bound to use every means to repel; that General Gaines had been ordered to Fort Jesup (near the Sabine), with similar orders as to any demonstration by land; that if there appeared to be any serious intention upon the part

¹ Nelson to Murphy, March 11, 1844; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 95.

² Calhoun to Van Zandt and Henderson, April 11, 1844; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 96. The italics are not in the original.

of Mexico to invade Texas the President would send a message to Congress, requesting them to adopt such measures as might be necessary for the defence of Texas; and that "if the emergency should require it" the President would "say in his message that he would in the meantime consider it his duty to defend Texas against aggression, and will accordingly do so."¹

Henderson and Van Zandt could not have been misled by these assurances. They undoubtedly knew quite as well as either Calhoun or Tyler what were the limits of the President's powers, but they were satisfied to take what they could get. "Much more," they wrote in the despatch just quoted, "passed between Mr. Calhoun and ourselves on this subject, calculated to assure us that everything would be done by the United States to protect Texas from the aggressions of Mexico, but which we cannot now mention"; and they signed the proposed treaty on the twelfth of April.

This instrument recited that the people of Texas at the time of adopting their Constitution had, by an almost unanimous vote, expressed their desire to be incorporated into the Union of the United States; that they were "still desirous of the same with equal unanimity"; and that the United States, "actuated solely by the desire to add to their own security and prosperity and to meet the wishes of the government and people of Texas," had determined to accomplish an object so important to the future and permanent welfare of both parties. The treaty then provided for the cession of the whole of Texas to the United States. Public lands were to be subject to the laws regulating the public lands in other territories of the United States. The United States assumed and agreed to pay the public debts and liabilities of Texas, however created. The amount of such debts and the legality and validity thereof were to be determined by a commission appointed by the President of the United States. The citizens of Texas were to be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty

¹ Van Zandt and Henderson to Jones, April 12, 1844; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 269.

and property, and admitted, as soon as might be consistent with the principles of the federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights, privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States. Until further provision was made the laws of Texas would remain in force, and all executive and judicial officers, except the President, Vice-President, and heads of departments, were to retain their offices.¹

The treaty was not sent to the Senate for ten days after it was signed, and during that period Calhoun endeavored to propitiate the Mexican government. Almonte had reported, a month before, that a treaty was in preparation, and that the Secretary of State hoped to induce Mexico to defer hostilities by his suggestions of indemnity; and he expressed himself as confident that if annexation should ever be carried through, the New England states, and perhaps New York and Pennsylvania, would secede, or, if not, would refuse to join in the war, for he had been so assured by members of Congress, senators, and other influential persons. This, he added, was without counting upon the abolitionists, who were and would be decided supporters of the Mexican cause.² Nevertheless, he wrote next day that he was convinced war was inevitable. There was not a moment to lose. The army of the North ought to begin operations in Texas without delay, for April, May, and June were the best season.³ He was disappointed to find that Pakenham was not disposed to interfere with the American plans with respect to Texas, and he now felt certain that the British government would not interpose decisively to prevent annexation; nor would it expose itself to a war which might injure its enormous trade with the United States. This he thought surprising, but he regarded it as a sufficient explanation of British inaction.⁴ Almonte was thus prepared for the official announcement that a treaty had actually been concluded—an announcement which was not delayed.

¹ The text is in H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 5-8.

² Almonte to Minister of Relations, March 15, 1844; *Sec. de Rel. Ext. MSS.*

³ Same to same, March 16, 1844; *ibid.*

⁴ Same to same, March 20, 1844; *ibid.*

At a conference with Calhoun on April 17 the latter told Almonte that a treaty with Texas had been signed five days before, but he did not think it should be regarded as a cause of offence to Mexico; the American government had declared that it did not recognize any right in Mexico over Texan territory, but still, to avoid difficulties, he thought some compensation should be given if Mexico would renounce its pretensions, and he desired to know Almonte's opinion, and whether he thought the Mexican government would receive favorably a proposition of that kind. He did not, he said, intend to send the treaty to the Senate until after despatching a messenger to Mexico with such a proposition.

Almonte, according to his own account, replied that this was not the way to avoid a war; that no consideration for the dignity of Mexico had been observed; and that such a communication could not be favorably received if it was proposed to annex Texas without first obtaining the consent of Mexico.

"Calhoun," Almonte continued, "tried to excuse his government by reason of its fears of England and other reasons even less plausible; and he again intimated that he was going to send a messenger to Mexico with letters for our government, in which would be set out the causes which had induced the United States to act as they had done, and a proposition would be made for the acquisition of Texas. At the same time he said he thought that since Texas, through the intervention of England, had offered five million dollars for the recognition of its independence, the United States might do as much if the boundaries it proposed were accepted. I replied that he might do what he liked in this matter, but that I did not wish to have anything to do with this negotiation as I had no authority in regard to it, nor did I wish to receive any proposition of any kind whatever, as my government had been so ignominiously treated."¹

The interview with Almonte ended with this very inamicable remark, and Calhoun sent off a special messenger, as he had said he would do, with instructions to Benjamin E. Green, then American chargé d'affaires in Mexico.

¹ Same to same, April 18, 1844; *ibid.*

Green was merely directed to make known the fact of the signature of the treaty to the Mexican government, and to give the strongest assurance that the United States, in adopting this measure, was actuated by no feelings of disrespect or indifference to the honor or dignity of Mexico. The step, it was said, had been forced on the government of the United States in self-defence in consequence of the policy adopted by Great Britain in reference to the abolition of slavery in Texas. Green was also to assure the Mexican government of the President's desire to settle all questions between the two countries which might grow out of this treaty, including the question of boundary, on the most liberal and satisfactory terms, and for this purpose the boundary of Texas had not been specified in the treaty, so that what the line should be still remained an open question, "to be fairly and fully discussed and settled according to the rights of each and the mutual interests and security of the two countries."¹

Calhoun having thus tried to forestall criticism in the Senate as to want of consideration for Mexico, also obtained a letter from the Texan representatives, giving assurances that annexation would "receive the hearty and full concurrence of the people of Texas," and presenting statistics as to the extent of the public lands and the amount of the debts and liabilities of the republic.²

Finally, he composed a document intended to set forth fully the reasons which, in his judgment, compelled the United States to annex Texas. This significant and characteristic paper was in form a note to Pakenham, in reply to one addressed by Pakenham to Upshur, on February 26, two days before the latter's death, in which was enclosed a copy of a despatch from Lord Aberdeen.

The British government, by the end of the year 1843, had begun to perceive that the efforts, official and unofficial, which had been made in England to procure the abolition of slavery in Texas, and Lord Aberdeen's rather airy refer-

¹ Calhoun to Green, April 19, 1844; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 54.

² Van Zandt and Henderson to Calhoun, April 15, 1844; *ibid.*, 13.

ences to the subject, were proving unfortunate. Slavery in Texas had not been abolished, and a spirit of opposition had been roused in the United States which seemed likely not only to perpetuate slavery in Texas, but to produce other highly undesirable results. It was, unquestionably, the wish of the British government to make Texas a free, strong, and above all an independent nation; but they discovered that what they were really doing was to drive her into the arms of the United States, the precise thing they were trying to avoid. Also they were still imperfectly informed as to the state of public opinion either in the United States or Texas. The members of Peel's cabinet evidently believed that the Texan people wished to be independent, and they did not believe that the American feeling in favor of annexation was by any means as strong and general as it was later shown to be. They also underestimated, or failed to understand, the general American dread of anything that might tend to disunion. It was in this frame of mind that Lord Aberdeen had thought to mend matters by addressing instructions to Pakenham, which he was to read to Upshur, and furnish a copy if desired.

This paper began with the statement that her Majesty's government thought it expedient to take measures for stopping at once the misrepresentations which had been circulated, the errors into which the government of the United States seemed to have fallen on the subject of the policy of Great Britain with respect to Texas, and the agitation which appeared to have prevailed of late in the United States relative to British designs. Great Britain had recognized the independence of Texas, and desired to see that independence generally recognized, especially by Mexico. But this desire did not arise from any special motive of self-interest. The British government was convinced that the recognition of Texas by Mexico must conduce to the benefit of both countries, thus advancing the commercial dealings of Great Britain with both. Great Britain, moreover, did not desire to establish in Texas any dominant influence, her objects being purely commercial. It was well known to the whole

world that Britain desired, and was constantly exerting herself to procure, the general abolition of slavery throughout the world.

"With regard to Texas, we avow that we wish to see slavery abolished there as elsewhere; and we should rejoice if the recognition of that country by the Mexican Government should be accompanied by an engagement on the part of Texas to abolish slavery eventually, and under proper conditions, throughout the republic. But although we earnestly desire and feel it to be our duty to promote such a consummation, we shall not interfere unduly, or with an improper assumption of authority, with either party, in order to ensure the adoption of such a course. We shall counsel, but we shall not seek to compel. . . . The British Government, as the United States well know, have never sought in any way to stir up disaffection or excitement of any kind in the slaveholding states of the American Union. Much as we should wish to see those states placed on the firm and solid footing which we conscientiously believe is to be attained by general freedom alone, we have never, in our treatment of them, made any difference between the slaveholding and the free States of the Union. All are, in our eyes, entitled, as component members of the Union, to equal political respect, favor, and forbearance on our part. To that wise and just policy we shall continue to adhere."¹

Calhoun, in writing a reply to Pakenham, expressed his pleasure at Lord Aberdeen's disavowal of any intention on the part of the British government to resort to measures which might tend to disturb the internal tranquillity of the slave-holding states, and thereby affect the prosperity of the American Union; but he expressed deep concern at Lord Aberdeen's statement that Great Britain desired, and was constantly exerting herself, to procure the general abolition of slavery throughout the world. The President, said Calhoun, had examined with much care and solicitude what would be the effect upon the prosperity and safety of the United States should Great Britain succeed in the endeavor to abolish slavery in Texas, and he had come to the conclusion that the result would endanger both the safety and the prosperity of the American Union. Under this conviction, it was felt to be the imperious duty of the federal

¹ Aberdeen to Pakenham, Dec. 26, 1843; *ibid.*, 49.

government to adopt, in self-defence, the most effectual measures to prevent such a disaster, and for this reason a treaty had been concluded between the United States and Texas for the annexation of the latter. The people of Texas had long desired annexation, which the United States had declined to agree to; but the time had now arrived when they could no longer refuse consistently with their own security and peace and with the sacred obligations imposed by their constitutional compact for mutual defence and protection.

The government of the United States, Calhoun continued, was in no way responsible for the circumstances which had imposed this obligation on them. They had had no agency in bringing about the state of things which had terminated in the separation of Texas from Mexico. The true cause of this event was the diversity in character, habits, religion, and political influence of the two countries. The American government was equally without responsibility for that state of things which had driven them, in self-defence, to adopt the policy of annexation. The United States had remained passive. Great Britain had adopted as a policy the universal abolition of slavery. That policy within her own possessions might be humane and wise. Whether it was so in the United States was not a question to be decided by the federal government. The rights and duties of the federal government were limited to protecting, under the guarantees of the Constitution, each member of the Union in whatever policy it might adopt in reference to the portion of the country within its own limits. A large number of the states had decided that it was neither wise nor humane to change the relation which had existed between the two races ever since the first settlement of the country, while others, where the African race was less numerous, had adopted the opposite policy. All were entitled to protection.

Calhoun concluded by a very long statement of his own views as to the inhumanity and unwisdom of abolition, quoting statistics of the number of negroes who were deaf and dumb, blind, idiots, insane, paupers, and in prison in

the free and slave states, respectively; in order to show what he asserted to be the wretched condition of the African race under freedom.¹

Calhoun's views as to the obligations of the federal government to protect the several states against attempts at abolition were only a restatement of views which he had embodied in a series of resolutions presented by him to the Senate on December 27, 1836, and which he had defended in a series of speeches beginning December 28 and running to January 12, 1837. The whole letter indeed, as Benton said, was not written for Lord Aberdeen, although addressed to him through Pakenham; and it was sent to those for whom it was really intended, to wit, the American Senate, long before Lord Aberdeen ever saw it.

It was generally regarded as a most extraordinary indiscretion.

"I have just been informed," wrote the Texan secretary of legation, "that Mr. Calhoun has, in his letter to the Senate, placed the question almost solely on the ground of British interference with the institution of slavery, and presents this as the grand argument for the measure. Such a position may answer with the South, but it will only create and strengthen opposition North and West. Indeed I heard this morning that the views of Mr. Calhoun had brought the Ohio Senators into the opposition."²

Having thus formulated his statements to his own satisfaction, Calhoun was at length ready to have the treaty, with the accompanying documents—the instructions to Green in Mexico, and the correspondence with the Texan and British legations in Washington—transmitted to the Senate. It was accordingly sent in by the President on April 22, 1844, with a message in which he tried his best to give the transaction a national rather than a sectional importance, and thus mitigate the force of Calhoun's blow.

The President, in defending the treaty, congratulated the country on "reclaiming a territory which formerly constituted a portion, as it is confidently believed, of its dominion,

¹ Calhoun to Pakenham, April 18, 1844; *ibid.*, 50-53.

² Raymond to Jones, April 24, 1844; Jones, 343.

by the treaty of cession of 1803, by France to the United States." The character of the inhabitants of the country proposed to be annexed, its fertile soil and its genial and healthy climate, would all add to the wealth of the Union; the coastwise trade of the country would "swell to a magnitude which cannot be easily computed," and the advantages to the manufacturing and mining interests of the country would be of the most important character. These were some of the many advantages which would accrue to the Eastern and Middle states, while at the same time the Southern and Southwestern states would find in the fact of annexation "protection and security to their peace and tranquillity, as well against all domestic as foreign efforts to disturb them; thus consecrating anew the Union of the States, and holding out the promise of its perpetual duration."