"bad feelings and hostility to the administration," and that, taken in connection with the letter to Archer, the administration would not be safe in intrusting the command of the army in the field to one who was so bitterly opposed.\(^1\)

Nevertheless, the cautious President discussed the matter twice over with his cabinet before a reply to Scott was sent. The reply was drafted by Marcy and revised by Buchanan, and expressed in very fitting language the surprise and deep regret of the President at Scott's letter, and at the imputations it contained. In view of General Scott's opinions of the motives and designs of the Executive,

"the President would be wanting in his duty to the country if he were to persist in his determination of imposing upon you the command of the army in the war against Mexico. . . . I am therefore directed, by him, to say that you will be continued in your present position here, and will devote your efforts to making arrangements and preparations for the early and vigorous prosecution of hostilities against Mexico."²

Scott saw that he had gone too far, and on the instant of receiving Marcy's letter wrote another long explanation of his views; but this time he was apologetic and explanatory. "Your letter of this date," he wrote, "received at about 6 P. M. as I sat down to take a hasty plate of soup, demands a prompt reply"; and he explained that when he had written of impatience felt, "perhaps in high quarters" (not the highest quarter), he had intended to refer to several leading friends and supposed confidants of the President in Congress. He believed that they would sooner or later open fire on him; and his former letter had been written, in part, to guard the President against them. He wished he had the time to do justice to his recollection of the President's excellent sense, military comprehension, patience, and courtesies in the course of their interviews; but whether it was the President's pleasure to send him to the Rio Grande or retain him in Washington, he was ready to do his duty.3

¹ Polk's Diary, I, 415. ² Marcy to Scott, May 25, 1846; Sen. Doc. 378, 29 Cong., 1 sess., 7-9.

³Scott to Marcy, May 25, 1846; ibid., 12.

There was a further exchange of letters of no special significance, and there the matter (officially) ended; but, in response to a request from Congress, all the correspondence was published. Scott's unlucky phrases tickled the sense of humor of the American people, and for years his "hasty plate of soup" and the "fire upon my rear" were household words throughout the country.

The bewildered cabinet at Washington, being thus left without a professional adviser, took up for itself the question of planning a campaign, and naturally turned again to the more political objects—the securing of California and Chihuahua.

It was thought probable that the navy alone could not conquer and hold so large a country as California. It was therefore concluded that reinforcements should be sent. But to send any considerable force by sea to California was evidently something that would consume much time, for it would be impossible to transport a large body of men with their supplies across the Isthmus of Panama, even if ships could have been procured in time to meet them in the Pacific. A voyage round Cape Horn was a matter of many months, even after transports were secured. The other solution was a march across the continent.

After much conversation and discussion, it was finally settled that an expedition under Colonel Kearny should be authorized, and confidential orders were sent on June 3, 1846, directing him, after securing New Mexico, to proceed with a part of his men by way of the Gila River to the Pacific coast. An additional thousand mounted troops were called for from Missouri to join him (making two thousand volunteers in all), and Kearny was authorized to enlist "as many of the valuable men about Bent's fort"—trappers and plainsmen—as practicable. In addition, he was authorized to muster into service men from the Mormon emigrants, then on their way to California, and such American citizens as could be found on the Sacramento River. With this miscellaneous force he was to take possession of California, establish temporary civil governments,

and "act in such a manner as best to conciliate the inhabitants, and render them friendly to the United States." It was hoped that he might be in California before winter, but the widest discretion was left to him. Artillery, ammunition, and supplies would be sent to him by sea.1 At the same time a battery of regular artillery was ordered to go by Cape Horn,2 and somewhat later a regiment of New York volunteers was also sent by the same route.3

The expedition to Chihuahua was more slowly evolved. It had been provisionally agreed to march "near four thousand men" to Chihuahua, and General John E. Wool was sent for to come to Washington to confer with the President and the Secretary of War. But these conferences seem to have developed doubts and difficulties, and Wool was merely ordered to go west to raise a force of volunteers and march them to the Rio Grande. What he was to do with them when he got there, was a matter to be decided thereafter.4 A fortnight later he was ordered to proceed at once to San Antonio, Texas, and take command of the forces ordered to that point. He was to report to General Taylor and await his orders, which, Wool was told, would probably require him to march on Chihuahua. A regular battery of field artillery, two companies of dragoons, and two companies of regular infantry would probably form a part of his force.5

But the despatch of Kearny and Wool on their respective expeditions did not help solve the really troublesome problem of the war. The inquiry still kept coming up: What was to be done with the main army under Taylor? Taylor himself, as soon as he had taken Matamoros, had asked the same question.

"Not being fully in possession," he wrote, "of the views or policy of the government in regard to operations in this quarter, modified, as they perhaps have been, by the recent defeat of the Mexican army, I have the honor respectfully to solicit further instructions for my guidance."

It was plain to him that an advance by land from Matamoros was impracticable in view of the character of the country; but if the river proved navigable for steam-boats as high as Camargo, and if a depot could be established and maintained there, he believed operations could be carried on thence in the direction of Monterey.1

Taylor's letter was crossed by one from the Secretary of War which exhibited even greater uncertainty.

"You are advised," wrote Marcy, "to prosecute the war with vigor, in the manner you may deem most effective. Not knowing what are the operations you propose to carry on, I cannot well determine the number of volunteers you will be likely to want. I am anxious to hear your views as to the measures you propose to execute. It is hoped that while the season favors, you will make such progress as that your troops may be enabled safely to occupy healthy positions before the less healthy season commences. I wish to be favored with your views."2

Before receiving Taylor's letter of May 21, Marcy wrote again, explaining the attitude of perplexity which prevailed in Washington. The towns on the Rio Grande above Laredo were believed to be healthy, and Monterey, in the interior, particularly so. It was specially desirable that Monterey should be taken and held. It was hoped that these points might be secured before the autumn campaign should open. The uninterrupted use of the Rio Grande for the transportation of supplies was counted on. But the nature of that very irregular stream was evidently not at all understood at head-quarters, nor the nature of

¹ Polk's Diary, I, 427, 429, 437-440. Scott to Kearny, May 31, 1846; Marcy to Kearny, June 3, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 241-245.

² Scott to Tompkins, June 20, 1846; ibid., 245. William Tecumseh Sherman

was junior first lieutenant of this battery. ³ Benton, for some strange reason, thought they must go as emigrants, to be discharged in California at the end of their service.—(Polk's Diary, I, 481.)

⁵ Adjutant-General to Wool, June 11, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess,

¹ Taylor to Adjutant-General, May 21, 1846; ibid., 300. The city of Monterey, which of course is not to be confounded with Monterey in California, was the principal town of the department of Nuevo Leon, about a hundred and fifty miles in a straight line from the nearest point on the Rio Grande. The modern (and perhaps the more correct) spelling is "Monterrey."

² Marey to Taylor, May 28, 1846; ibid., 282.

the road from the river to Monterey, nor the means of taking that city.

Taylor's "views and suggestions in relation to the fall campaign" were therefore once more requested. The President's determination, he was informed,

"is to have the war prosecuted with vigor, and to embrace in the objects to be compassed in that campaign such as will dispose the enemy to desire an end of the war. Shall the campaign be conducted with the view of striking at the city of Mexico; or confined, so far as regards the forces under your immediate command, to the northern provinces of Mexico? . . . Should our army penetrate far into the interior of Mexico, how are supplies to be obtained? Can they be, to any considerable extent, drawn from the enemy's country, or must they be obtained from the United States? If the latter what are the facilities and difficulties of transportation?

"A peace must be conquered in the shortest space of time practicable. Your views of the manner of doing it are requested."

Four days later some, at least, of the uncertainties in the minds of the authorities seem to have been dissipated, due, perhaps, to the fact that the President and his cabinet were for the moment wholly absorbed in the final adjustment of the Oregon question, so that the subject of a plan of campaign was temporarily left in the hands of soldiers.2 At any rate, the general in command of the army sent Taylor that week the first definite orders he received. He was instructed that, with the reinforcements on the way, he would soon have a total force of about twenty-three thousand men.

"Without waiting," continued the orders, "for the arrival of that amount of force, but before, and as soon as you shall deem it safe, in respect to the relative numbers and positions of the enemy, your knowledge of the country, your supplies and means of transportation, it is the wish and expectation of the President that, with your accustomed energy, you take up lines of march beyond the Rio Grande, and press your operations toward the heart of the enemy's country; that is, upon such important points as you may deem necessary to conquer and to hold. The high road to the capital of Mexico will of course be one of those lines." 1

It was not until the second of July that Taylor was in receipt of these various orders and inquiries and was able to answer them. He replied at some length, treating the subject as exclusively a question of subsistence, which, he said, "is certainly the most important one to be considered." He evidently did not consider the Mexican troops capable of offering serious resistance. His plan was that as soon as enough river steam-boats could be collected, the regular troops, with some of the volunteers, should be sent to Camargo, a point on the Rio Grande about eighty or ninety miles above Matamoros in a straight line, and "establish there a depot and base from which to operate toward the mountains." The remainder of the volunteers he proposed to leave at healthy camps of instruction, to await "the season for more extensive operations." He was of opinion that no column of more than six thousand men could be subsisted on a march from the Rio Grande to Monterey and Saltillo; and that if the inhabitants should prove actively hostile it might be impossible to sustain such a column at Saltillo, still more so to pass beyond that city.

From Camargo he estimated the distance to the city of Mexico to be nearly a thousand miles,2 and, taking into account the character of the country and the people, he did not believe it practicable to keep open so long a line of communication.

"It is, therefore," he concluded, "my opinion that our operations from this frontier should not look to the city of Mexico, but should be confined to cutting off the northern provinces-an undertaking of comparative facility and assurance of success." 3

¹ Same to same, June 8, 1846; ibid., 324.

² Aberdeen's draft of the Oregon treaty was received on Saturday, June 6, and discussed by the President with members of his cabinet on that and the three following days. On Wednesday, June 10, the President's message was sent to the Senate, and on Friday, June 12, the Senate advised the acceptance of the British proposals.

¹Scott to Taylor, June 12, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 326.

² The distance via Monterey, Saltillo, and San Luis Potosí would in reality hardly exceed seven hundred and fifty miles.

³ Taylor to Adjutant-General, July 2, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess.,

Once more Taylor's report was crossed by an impatient letter from the Secretary of War. Much reliance, he was told, would be placed on his opinions, and the scope of the inquiry was now enlarged.

"If, from all the information you may communicate to the department, as well as that derived from other sources, it should appear that the difficulties and obstacles to the conducting of a campaign from the Rio Grande, the present base of your operations, for any considerable distance into the interior of Mexico, will be very great, the department will consider whether the main invasion should not ultimately take place from some other point on the coast—say Tampico, or some other point in the vicinity of Vera Cruz. . . . Upon these important points, in addition to those mentioned in my letter of the 8th of June, your opinion and views are desired at the earliest period your duties will permit you to give them. In the mean time the department confidently relies on you to press forward your operations vigorously to the extent of your means, so as to occupy the important points within your reach on the Rio Grande, and in the interior. It is presumed that Monterey, Chihuahua, and other places in your direction, will be taken and held. . . . Your answer to this communication you will please to address directly to the President of the United States."1

The views of the cabinet were accurately reflected in Marcy's letter. An absolute distrust of General Scott and the permanent officials of the War Department, a determination to take Monterey and Chihuahua (by Taylor's and Wool's troops), and a casting about for some practicable plan of marching to the capital of Mexico (probably by way of Vera Cruz), were the clear outlines of the government policy in the month of July. And while waiting to hear from Taylor, all discussion of strategy was suspended.

On the first of August Taylor replied, as he had been instructed, directly to the President. He had, he said, little to add to his report of the second of July. Whether a large force could be subsisted beyond Monterey must be deter-

mined by experiment. If it should prove that a column of ten thousand men could be sustained in provisions at Saltillo, it might advance thence to San Luis Potosí.

"If, on the other hand, a column cannot be sustained beyond Monterey, it will be for the government to determine, from considerations of state, whether a simple occupation of the frontier departments, (including Chihuahua and New Mexico), or, in addition to such occupation, an expedition against the Capital, (by way of Vera Cruz), be most expedient." ¹

Taylor could hardly have been expected, in the absence of more definite information than he then possessed, to answer differently; and it was evidently for the government to decide upon the main strategical features of the war, aided by such knowledge of the facts and such professional advice from the officers of the army and navy as it could secure. To this rather obvious conclusion the cabinet finally came. Their discussions as to a plan of campaign were resumed at the end of August, and the happy thought then occurred to the Secretary of the Navy that his department possessed some information about the possibilities of landing an expedition at Vera Cruz and taking the castle of San Juan de Ulúa. Commodore Conner's despatches were therefore produced, and after reading them it was decided to write to him for more specific information, and again a decision as to strategy was postponed.2

Meanwhile California had been taken (quite unknown to the administration)³ and Kearny had seized New Mexico. Starting from Fort Leavenworth late in the month of June,

¹ Marcy to Taylor, July 9, 1846; *ibid.*, 335. Italics in the original. This letter was drafted in part by Benton, and the rest by the President. Polk's contribution was that which relates to strategy. Benton's to the part of the letter (to be referred to later) which deals with the possibility of opening negotiations for peace. The President considered it "a document of more than ordinary importance," as of course it was.—(Polk's *Diary*, II, 16.)

¹ Taylor to the President, August 1, 1846; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 336–338.

² Polk's Diary, II, 104 (August 29, 1846).

The news that Sloat had hoisted the American flag at Monterey (California) and that "Frémont with his men had been attacked near St. Francisco, by Castro the Commandant Gen'l of Mexico in California, and that after a short skirmish Castro had retreated," reached the British legation in Washington by despatches from Mexico on August 31. (It had reached the city of Mexico about August 11.) Next morning, the information was sent to the State Department from the legation, with a copy of Sloat's proclamation.— (Polk's Diary, II, 108.)

he had marched rapidly southwestward over the well-known and well-travelled Santa Fe trail. Moving in several detachments, his troops were all concentrated on the Arkansas River near Bent's fort, a few miles above the present town of Las Animas, in the state of Colorado, by the end of July. They were still within the limits of the United States. They had marched at the remarkable rate of nearly twenty miles a day for a whole month.

The "Army of the West" then consisted of six troops of the First United States dragoons—Kearny's own regiment—the First regiment (eight companies) of Missouri mounted volunteers, two volunteer batteries of horse artillery, and two companies of volunteer infantry—in all about seventeen hundred men with sixteen guns; but reinforcements had been provided for and were shortly to follow, although nobody expected any real opposition from Mexican troops. The one great and essential difficulty which was anticipated in the operations of Kearny's command lay in the quartermaster's and commissary's departments. How was the army to be fed, and kept clothed and shod? How, in other words, were its supplies to be procured and moved over the hundreds of miles of wilderness that lay between the Missouri and the Rio Grande?

'The army concentrated at Fort Leavenworth," the quartermastergeneral reported, "from its proximity to States abounding in supplies and means of transportation, was more readily and speedily put in motion than the others; but its line of operations extending to Santa Fe, a distance of more than eight hundred miles, vast means were required to enable it to move, as well as to keep up its supplies. . . . There have been furnished for the transportation of that army, and its reinforcements and supplies, 459 horses, 3,658 mules, 14,904 oxen, 1,556 wagons, and 516 pack-saddles." ¹

These figures were confessedly incomplete, for the accounts of the officer in charge of the important depot at St. Louis had not been received when this report was prepared, but they indicate the magnitude of Kearny's prepared.

rations and afford a picture of the herds and the long lines of prairie wagons that toiled after the fighting men.

On the second of August the little army crossed the Arkansas into territory which was recognized by the Florida treaty as a part of the Spanish possessions. Kearny professed to regard it as a part of Texas, and therefore of the United States, basing the assertion, of course, on the preposterous claim that the Rio Grande to its source was the Texan boundary.

On the same day that he crossed the river he sent forward to Santa Fe two merchants of Chihuahua who had accompanied his column-Magoffin and Gonzales-with an escort consisting of an officer and twelve dragoons. The officer, Captain Philip St. George Cooke, kept a diary, and has left a lively account of his adventures on the journey. Pushing forward as fast as possible, the party found themselves unable for some time to pass "this wonderfully mobile army," and it was not until the evening of the second day that they got ahead of the "long-legged infantry" volunteers who, singularly enough, led the advance. On the eighth of August Cooke's party saw the first Mexican settlements, and on the twelfth of August they rode under a flag of truce into Santa Fe itself. Their route followed closely that of the present Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and the distance they had travelled may be estimated at fully three hundred miles, a very creditable distance to be accomplished in less than eleven days.

Governor Armijo received Kearny's envoys politely, and promised to send back with them a "commissioner" to meet the American commander. The commissioner selected was a certain Doctor Henry Connelly, an American by birth, who had lived in Chihuahua for many years, where he was engaged in the business of importing goods from the United States.¹ Captain Cooke, accompanied by Doctor Connelly, set out upon his return soon after sunrise on the day following his arrival at Santa Fe. He was assured by the

¹ Report of the Quartermaster-General, Nov. 24, 1847; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 545.

¹See biographical sketch of Henry Connelly (afterward governor of New Mexico) in Connelley, *Doniphan's Expedition*, 276–282.

governor that he would be followed by a Mexican force of six thousand men.

Between San Miguel and Las Vegas, sixty or seventy miles back on the trail, Cooke rejoined Kearny, who was rapidly advancing with his wagon-train, artillery and all, over the broken country. Kearny did not stop to discuss matters with the representative of the governor, but pushed rapidly forward, haranguing the people at every settlement, and assuring them that he had come to extend over them the laws of the United States and that Armijo was no longer their governor. Rumors of resistance were received from Mexican and Indian natives, but no enemies were met, the most authentic story being that Armijo with a large force, variously stated at from two thousand to four thousand men, was ready to defend the Apache cañon, about fifteen miles southeast of Santa Fe. One of Kearny's officers relates how, as they advanced, they were met.

"As we approached the ruins of the ancient town of Pecos," he writes, "a large fat fellow, mounted on a mule, came towards us at full speed, and extending his hand to the general, congratulated him on the arrival of himself and army. He said, with a roar of laughter, 'Armijo and his troops have gone to hell, and the Cañon is all clear.' This was the alcalde of the settlement."2

On the next day, the eighteenth of August, the little army marched twenty-nine miles into Santa Fe. Passing through the cañon they found an abattis prepared by Armijo, but no other sign of an enemy. As they approached the town, they received a letter from the acting governor offering hospitality; and at sunset the whole of the hungry and very thirsty American force was in the capital of New Mexico, the United States flag was hoisted over the palace, and a salute of thirteen guns was being fired by the artillery.

Governor Armijo, it was learned, had actually collected a certain number of inhabitants with the object of making at

least an ostensible defence, and thus "saving his face"a thing dear to the Spanish and Oriental mind. Why he did not carry out his purpose is not fully known. All that was ever definitely ascertained was that there were "dissensions" among Armijo's followers, and that he had on the last day disbanded his force and retreated south with about two hundred and seventy men-who formed the Mexican garrison of the territory-and such artillery as he possessed. He abandoned his guns soon afterward, and reached El Paso about the end of August, with only sixty men belonging to the regular cavalry. The rest, who were presidial troops, had deserted.1

Armijo himself never seems to have explained his conduct nor (although commissioned as an officer of the Mexican army) to have been called upon to defend it. All sorts of explanations were current in the American army. Cooke, who saw and talked with him only four or five days before his flight, thought him doubtful and irresolute,

"with little or no military experience, distrustful of the loyalty of the population he has habitually fleeced, and of their feeble ignorance which has been much impressed by our long commercial intercourse, ... halting between loyalty to his army commission, lately bestowed, and a desire to escape the dangers of war upon terms of personal advantage." 2

Magoffin, one of the men who went with Cooke, told Senator Benton a long time afterward that he himself had persuaded Armijo not to make a stand. Very likely Magoffin did argue with him in this sense, but that he alone prevented any resistance being made is evidently an exaggeration.3 The truth probably is that Armijo, who had never

¹ Doctor Connelly, it seems, was sent back to Santa Fe, and it is said that his report as to the number and condition of the American army created a panic among the Mexican officials.—(Ibid., 281.)

² Emory's Notes of a Military Reconnoissance, 29.

¹ Bustamante, Nuevo Bernal Diaz, II, 103 et seq.

² Cooke's Conquest of New Mexico and California, 32. ³ Benton's account of Magoffin's dealings with Armijo and the Comandante General Don Diego Archuleta (whom Benton calls Archuletti) is as absurd and inexact as anything in the Thirty Years' View. Magoffin was full of fun, an Irishman by descent and a Kentuckian by birth, and his story doubtless lost nothing in the telling. Benton distorted it further. He also says (which is true) that he took Magoffin to the President and the Secretary of War, who were glad to make use of his services.—(Thirty Years' View, II, 683.) It was

218

seen war, was in a panic and afraid of his own people quite as much as of the Americans; and when it actually came to the point, with the great mass of his men obviously unwilling to fight, his resolution finally failed.

It was not surprising that all sorts of explanations should have been invented to account for Kearny's astonishing success, for his performance was almost unique in the history of war. Cooke, an educated soldier, sums it up as follows:

"The 'Army of the West' marched from Bent's Fort with only rations calculated to last, by uninterrupted and most rapid marches, until it should arrive at Santa Fe. Is this War? Tested by the rules of the science, this expedition is anomalous, not to say Quixotic. A colonel's command, called an army, marches eight hundred miles beyond its base, its communication liable to be cut off by the slightest effort of the enemy—mostly through a desert—the whole distance almost totally destitute of resources, to conquer a territory of 250,000 square miles. . . . This is the art of War as practiced in America."

But the true and sufficient explanation was that Kearny was an officer of great experience; he knew thoroughly what his men could do; he had excellent information as to the character and temper of the people among whom he was going; and he judged with perfect accuracy what were the obstacles he would have to meet.

Shortly after entering Santa Fe, Kearny issued a proclamation declaring his intention to hold the department of New Mexico, on both sides of the Rio Grande, as a part of the United States, and announcing that he was instructed to respect the church, and to protect the persons and property of all peaceable inhabitants.² He also promulgated what

on the evening of June 15 that Magoffin was brought by Benton to the White House, and on June 17 he had an extended interview with Polk and Marcy, "It was concluded," the former noted, "that he could be useful in furnishing supplies for the army, and conciliating the people of the Northern Provinces of Mexico to the U. S., and with that view he was informed that the Secretary of War would on to-morrow give him letters to Col. Kearney who was in command of the expedition to Santa Fe, and also to the officer who might be in command of an expedition to Chihuahua, requesting them to avail themselves of his services."—(Polk's Diary, I, 472, 475.)

¹ Cooke, 39. ² H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 170. He had issued a previous proclamation on July 31, just before crossing the Arkansas River, in which he and he called an "Organic Law for the territory of New Mexico," which professed on its face to have been ordained and established by the government of the United States.¹ Having thus settled civil affairs to his own satisfaction, but having in reality sown what proved to be fruitful seeds of discord and debate, Kearny took his way with about three hundred men to cross the continent to California. He left behind him the Missouri volunteers, under Colonel Doniphan, and these were soon afterward reinforced by a second regiment, under Colonel Sterling Price, who became military governor.

Doniphan also left Santa Fe later in the year on a march to Chihuahua, leaving but a reduced garrison in New Mexico. Early in 1847 a rather formidable revolt broke out, which Price put down, not without considerable loss of life, in the course of a fortnight.² Thenceforward there was no attempt by the Mexican government or people to retake the territory. California and New Mexico were securely held, and the authorities at Washington were free to devote their undivided attention to "conquering a peace." ³

nounced that he entered New Mexico "for the purpose of seeking union with and ameliorating the condition of its inhabitants." Nothing was then said of boundaries or of permanent annexation.—(*Ibid.*, 168.)

¹ Ibid., 177–229.

² See details in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 520-538.

³ For Kearny's march to Santa Fe, reference may be made to Ripley, I, 270-281; Cooke's Conquest of New Mexico, etc., 1-70; Emory's Notes of a Military Reconnoissance (Sen. Doc. 7, 30 Cong., 1 sess.), 15-45; Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, 129-220; Edwards, Campaign in New Mexico, 1-25; Cutts's Conquest of California and New Mexico, 32-67; Twitchell's Military Occupation of New Mexico, 38-80.