

SPEECH

Mr. C Hudson of Massachusetts. ON THE PORTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE RELATING TO THE MEXICAN WAR.

Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, Dec. 16 1846.

The House, in Committee of the Whole having under consideration the proposition to refer the President's Message to the different committees--

Mr. HUDSON addressed the House as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am fully aware of the charges which I shall draw down upon myself by expressing the views which I entertain upon the subject now before us.

The President of the United States himself has set us the example of denouncing as traitors all those who dare to speak their minds upon this floor and in this country; and his flatterers have followed his example. But sir, none of these things move me. I look with equal indifference upon the denunciations of the President and of his flatterers on the floor. I will speak my sentiments here or elsewhere, and I will speak them freely. If I believe the Executive is wrong in any of his measures, I will make the declaration. If I believe he has usurped power, and trampled upon the Constitution of the United States, none of the denunciations or sarcasms of gentlemen on this floor will deter me from giving full expression of my views and feelings.

Nothing, I say, that the President can say or do, will deter me in any degree from a full and fair expression of my own opinions. Has it come to this, Mr. Chairman, that a President can arrogate to himself the war-making power, can trample the Constitution under foot, and wantonly involve the nation in war, and the people to submit to this, and justify him and his course, or be branded as traitors to their country? Why, sir, if this doctrine prevails, the more corrupt and Administration is, if it has the power or the daring to involve this nation in a war without cause, the greater is its impurity; from the moment it has succeeded in committing that outrage, every mouth must be closed, and every one must bow in submission. A doctrine more corrupt, was never advanced; a sentiment more dastardly was never advocated in a deliberative assembly.

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provinces or departments of that Government, for the express purpose of meeting this indemnity. The first three instalments were paid promptly at the time. When the fourth fell due Mexico was embarrassed in her circumstances, and unable to meet the demands of our citizens.

This state of things continued until another three months expired, when another instalment was payable. She was unable at the time to meet this demand in money; she however, contends that she paid the fourth and fifth instalments, and shows the receipt of an agent appointed by our Government to that effect.

That agent however, contends that he received certain orders or drafts on mercantile houses, having a lien upon the Mexican Treasury, and that these drafts have been dishonored. But let us hear his own words upon this subject.

Mr. Voss, our agent, says in a letter to Mr. Slidell: "For the avowed purpose of liquidating the recognized American claims, General Santa Anna, the head of the Mexican Government, in May, 1843, decreed the collection of a forced loan, to be distributed in certain proportions through the departments of this Republic, and paid at periods corresponding to those stipulated in the convention to that effect with the Government of the United States.

This measure, essentially unpopular, could only have emanated from a government as absolute as that of Santa Anna then was; and even with the aid of his unlimited powers, was very imperfectly enforced; while the temptation to a misapplication of the funds collected amidst the difficulties by which Santa Anna was surrounded, is sufficiently obvious.

From these concurring circumstances the Mexican Government was absolutely unable to pay the instalment which became due in April, 1844; and in July of the same year, when another instalment should have been paid, the incapacity of the government to fulfil its engagements had become still greater. The arrears due at that period, on American claims, amounted to \$27,489,677.

"About the same time public attention was directed to the Texas question with renewed force, and amidst the angry excitement which it occasioned, the press found a popular theme for complaint in the payment of the American claims, and freely advocated its discontinuance."

Here we have the declaration of our agent on the spot, that the failure of Mexico is in some degree at least chargeable upon ourselves. We all know that prior to April 30, 1844, the period at which Mexico became delinquent, a treaty was got up clandestinely by the President of the United States for the annexation of Texas to this country.

It is true that that treaty was rejected by the Senate. But it was immediately made a question before the people, and the candidate of one of the parties--who is now the President of the United States--was nominated almost solely because he pledged to annexation. All this was known in Mexico. She saw a direct attempt making by our own people to despoil her of what she regarded as one of her own departments--a portion of her own departments--a portion of her republic.

This would naturally produce an obstacle in the way of obtaining the means to meet these instalments. The Mexican Government appear to have acted in good faith, and will be seen by their having recourse to a forced loan; and it was not until our folly and madness, in relation to Texas, exasperated her people, that the Government failed to comply with its treaty stipulations.

Though we were at peace with Mexico, and were required by law of nations, and our treaty stipulations, not to interfere in the contest between Mexico and Texas, it is a notorious fact that, from the commencement of her revolutionary struggle, our Government permitted our citizens by companies to organize and embark at noon-day for Texas, to aid her in her revolution. Nowell, a citizen of the U. S. and now a chaplain in our Navy, who spent some time in Texas, and who wrote a "History of the Revolution in Texas," says, "not only in Louisiana, but in Tennessee, in Alabama, in Georgia, and in other States, volunteers companies had been enrolled, and money subscribed in aid of Texas. The chivalry of the South and West was roused, and impatient to rush upon her plains. Already had the New Orleans Greys," and other volunteer companies from the States, won immortal honor in the fall of Bexar, &c.," p. 74.

This interference in her affairs, followed by the threatened annexation of Texas, would naturally exasperate Mexico, and render it more difficult to obtain the means to pay this indemnity. She was in fault in this respect, and I fear that an impartial world will not pronounce us faultless in this matter.

But for the sake of the case, I will admit that Mexico was altogether in the wrong. She failed to meet her just debts. But I maintain that this under all the circumstances of the case, was no just cause of war. My friend from Ohio (Mr. Giddings) allowed yesterday to the rejected had been enrolled, and money subscribed in aid of Texas. The chivalry of the South and West was roused, and impatient to rush upon her plains. Already had the New Orleans Greys," and other volunteer companies from the States, won immortal honor in the fall of Bexar, &c.," p. 74.

I will allude to another instance of repudiation. Mexico is not the only nation which has committed depredations upon our commerce. France towards the close of the last century, had been guilty of the same acts of violence. We demanded reparation at her hand. She admitted the justice of our claim; but for a valuable consideration, we released her, and became ourselves obligated to our citizens, who had been despoiled of their property by France.

And what has been our treatment towards those citizens? We have turned a deaf ear to their petitions for half a century. But during the last session of the present Congress, a bill was passed granting partial relief to our injured citizens. And what was the fate of that bill after it left this Capitol? We all know that it was vetoed by the President. It was returned with objections of the most extraordinary character, the principal of which were, that the amount due was too large, and had been due too long, and that probably Congress had not properly considered the subject. Here we see the President of the United States pursuing, towards our own citizens, the very course of conduct for which he arraigns Mexico; and according to his own doctrine, they have as just a cause of war against him, as we have against Mexico, on account of her indebtedness.

Another cause of war was set forth by the President, is the refusal of Mexico to receive Mr. Slidell. Mr. Chairman, I do not propose

to go into a detailed examination of the correspondence upon this subject. I will simply say, that Mexico apprized this Government in advance that the annexation of Texas would be regarded by her as an act of hostility. When Texas was annexed, the Mexican minister resident in this country demanded his passports and left the country; and thus diplomatic intercourse between this Government and Mexico ceased. Our Government subsequently sent a message to Mexico to ascertain whether she would open diplomatic relations, and receive a minister from the United States.

The Mexican minister informed us that, although Mexico has just ground of complaint against the United States for her conduct in relation to Texas, she would receive a commissioner to treat on that subject. And whenever Mexico spoke of receiving an agent from this Government, she was careful to use the term "commissioner;" and when there is any explanation whatever, any thing to fix the meaning of the term, it is commissioner to treat on the very subject which had been the cause of the suspension of diplomatic relations. A minister was sent to Mexico, but in what character did he appear? In the character of a special commissioner? No; he went as an "envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary," to reside near the Government of Mexico. He was authorized not to treat specially upon the subject which had interrupted our diplomatic relations, but upon all subjects in dispute between two Governments; and he demanded a reception as a resident minister in Mexico, clothed with full powers.

To his request Mexico replied, that the intercourse between two Governments was suspended on account of the annexation of Texas, and if they were to receive a minister resident in the country, it would be confessing that annexation was no just cause for the recall of their minister; and that they could not do it consistently with their honor and with the usage of nations; that they would receive a commissioner--and they made this declaration to the last--a commissioner to treat upon the subject which had interrupted our relations; and when that had dispersed, they would receive a minister resident. Now, it may be said, that this was special pleading; an after-thought on the part of Mexico. Well, suppose it was; was there not something of the same character on our part? They declared to the last that if we would send a commissioner to treat upon the subject which had interrupted our diplomatic relations, they would receive him; and when that was disposed of, they would receive a minister resident. We insisted that they must be a minister resident or none at all. Now, here are the facts in the case. I do not undertake to decide which was in the right, and which in the wrong; there seems to be a little special pleading on both sides of the question.

One nation or the other ought to have yielded. With our means, our character and standing before the world, we could have afforded to be generous, better perhaps than Mexico. Admitting, however, that Mexico was more in the wrong than we, I contend that there was no just cause of war in this case. Any nation, if she pleases, has a right to stand in an independent position, and refuse to open diplomatic relations with other Powers. It may be unwise in them to do it; but I have yet to learn that it is a just cause of war. There has been a little black republic in our own neighborhood with whom we have refused to interchange these civilities. The subject has frequently been brought up in the House, and voted down by the very men who feel so indignant towards Mexico because she would not receive Mr. Slidell as resident minister. China, I believe, to this day, receives no minister resident near her seat of government from any nation whatever. This may be folly, but it is not such a crime as will justify a war.

The gravest charge brought forward by the President, and one which deserves more consideration than any other, is this: Mexico passed the boundary of the United States, invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon American soil. If this charge was sustained, I admit that it would furnish a just cause of war. But this statement of the President, bold and frank, plain and intelligible as it is, is unfortunately wanting in justice and truth. The facts in the case do not in any degree sustain the President, but they are totally irreconcilable with his position, as I shall attempt to show.

Mexico passed our boundary! Our army, by the unjust orders of the President, passed the boundary of Mexico. Mexico commenced hostilities! The President himself was the aggressor. He ordered the army into Mexico; he commenced hostilities, not only without law, but in direct violation of the first principles of our organic law--exercising the war-making power, and thereby trenching upon the prerogative of Congress; and that too, while they were in session, and could have been consulted at any moment.

This is a just statement of the case. I will, however, give the President the full benefit of all the arguments he employs, and all the statements he makes in support of his position. In the first place, however, I wish to say that Texas, whatever were her boundaries, held by the right of revolution. As my friend from Tennessee (Mr. Gentry) observed, just as far as she extended her authority by the sword, and was able to maintain her jurisdiction, there her boundaries are to be sought. It matters not whether she was originally bounded by the Nueces or the Rio Grande; the question as to her original boundary is entirely superseded. She rebelled against the parent country; and just so far as she extended her arms and maintained her authority, just so far were her boundaries extended. She held her territory by the title by which she held herself--the right of revolution. But, while her boundary was formerly the Nueces, I admit she did extend her authority over that river, so as to include Corpus Christi, and a few small settlements on the western bank of that river. I make this statement in advance because the argument of the President which I shall have occasion to notice hereafter, requires that this fact be kept distinctly in view.

I say then, that the boundary of Texas, in this part of her dominion, was confined within the immediate valley of the Nueces. She made several attempts to extend her authority beyond, but she was unsuccessful; her forces did, in some instances, penetrate into the country beyond that valley, but they were utterly destroyed, captured, or put to death; and in every expedition beyond that point Texas utterly failed.

But now for the President's arguments in support of his position. And what are they? Texas (he says) was included originally in the Louisiana cession. Well, suppose that true; what then? Why, it has nothing to do with

the question. If Texas once belonged to the United States, it was ceded to Spain, and hence we have no claims to it on that account. Then the President speaks of the treaty with Santa Anna. I shall not, Mr. Chairman, dwell upon the subject. My first remark is, that there was no treaty made with Santa Anna--nothing that deserves the name of treaty. In the second place, he was a prisoner, and so not competent to treat; and third, if a treaty had been made and ratified, that treaty was violated by Texas herself; for one of the principal reasons why Santa Anna was induced to enter into that treaty, arrangement, or whatever it may be called, was, that he should be liberated and sent under the protection of Texas to Vera Cruz. He did embark for that city, but the populace demanded his detention, and he was brought back into Texas and kept a prisoner in close confinement. He himself makes this charge against the Texas Government, and the President of Texas admits it to be true, and regrets the occurrence. So that, if a treaty had been entered into the violation of treaty by Texas is a good reason why it should have no binding force. But there was no treaty; there was an arrangement, no doubt, between General Houston and Santa Anna; but what is perfectly conclusive upon this subject is, that this very agreement provided that it should be submitted to their respective governments for ratification, and Mexico refused to ratify it, and hence it was null and void.

But the President says that the Texan Congress, in 1836, when fixing their limits, declared that the Rio Grande, from its mouth to its source was their western boundary. And he spreads this before the country and before the world as an argument to justify us in our claims to the Rio Grande. Now Mr. Chairman, if the President of the U. S. states, a lawyer in his own country, should be called upon by one of his clients, and asked whether he could prosecute a claim successfully against a neighbor to a portion of land; and at the same time should inform him that he had no other title to it than the declaration of the individual from whom he had received his quit-claim deed, do you suppose he could hesitate a single moment in telling him he had no cause whatever? I do not believe that there is a petty lawyer in the country who would hesitate to declare that there was no foundation for the claim. And still the President of the United States, the head of a great nation, in a public document, spread before the country and the world, as a justification of an act of war, brings forward that consideration as evidence that the country to the Rio Grande was ours! Who does not blush for the honor of his country under circumstances like these!

But the President says this was claimed by Texas--that Texas declared the Rio Grande to be her western boundary. Well, Mexico declared the Sabine to be her eastern boundary. And what does that prove? As much in the one case as in the other. The declaration of Mexico is as conclusive as that of Texas; neither of them deserves one moment's consideration. And the President himself, by admitting that New Mexico was a department of Mexico, and Santa Fe its Capital, and that it was conquered by our arms, virtually admits that this argument is deserving no consideration. He knows that boundary can be established only by treaty or by the sword; and that neither of these can be alleged in favor of the claim of Texas to the Rio Grande.

But there is another argument of the President which deserves notice, and it is this: Texas, says he, had extended her authority beyond the Nueces, and to sum up all his declarations, because they all fall under the same general principle, they amount to this: Texas had extended her jurisdiction beyond the Nueces; she had a custom-house at Corpus Christi, on the immediate western bank of that river; the people living on that river, in the immediate valley of the Nueces, had been represented in the Texan Congress, and had assented to annexation to the United States, and were included within one of the Congressional districts of Texas; the United States, by an act of her Congress, had established a custom-house at Corpus Christi; all these things were just over the river, on the west bank in the immediate valley of the Nueces, and therefore--therefore what? Therefore we had a title to the country--where not 150 miles further, to the Rio Grande, where not one of these considerations will hold good! Beyond the Nueces, and therefore to the Rio Grande! Now what kind of logic is this?

Why, Mr. Chairman, suppose that a question had arisen before the Virginia portion of this District had been re-ceded, involving the boundary of the District, and it could be proved that the district extended south of the Potomac; that Alexandria and Jackson city were subject to the laws of the District; and from this it should be inferred that the District extended to the Mississippi--what would be thought of such an argument? It would be treated with deserved ridicule. But this is the logic of the message. Beyond the Potomac, and therefore to the Mississippi--is just as sound as beyond the Nueces, and therefore to the Rio Grande.

(To be Continued.)

FOOD FOR REFLECTION.--Separate mankind from each other as much as possible, and cut off the poor, the unfortunate, the degraded, and the vicious, from the sympathy, the example, the advice, the influence, of those more fortunate, prosperous, or more virtuous. Build more churches, so extravagant in expenditure that a poor man dare not look into one of them; much provide a seat; cushion the seats with velvet; press splendid organs; give ministers good salaries, good dinners, and confine them to the circle of their pen-owners; and then marvel that Christianity has so little influence in making poor men good citizens.

PATRICK TO HIS SWEETHEART. You're a brot of a creature, In form and in feature-- It's myself that now tells the same, And sure, now in troth, I'll not be very wrong, If you'll plaze me by changing your name.

A TRUE WIFE.--The editor of the Boston Chronology has the right idea with regard to a "sich in time." Hear him: Show me the wife that's on her watch For every little rent or scratch, And cures it with a timely patch, Before you know it; She is a woman fit to match, A lord or poet.

Mr. Wockhagenkiedwegbitengstoben fell down stairs the other day, and broke his nose into three pieces. Duelling bullets are now called, "half an ounce of satisfaction."

will respect my child, and not induce her to take any step that would subvert the lessons of morality and wisdom which I have toiled to impress upon her. She has nothing to depend upon but the labor of my hands, as her own are yet unskilled in industry. And I have sworn to her father, whose early death was caused by his love for me, and the cruel alienation of his father, that I would at least insure him this dowry, that his daughter should be as pure and irreproachable as her mother was; and that, although her position was humble, her virtue should be unblemished. A I tell you this, moreover, that if she forgets those lessons so dearly purchased, I shall not forget my father beyond her strength. And as it is my duty to remove her from danger, you must, therefore, either absent yourself, or swear solemnly, as I shall dictate to you.

"I have sworn," continued Bonaparte; "and, in fact, I no longer wish to see Naddi; I no longer seek her; but have endeavored to avoid all contact with her in the absence of her mother. But I am miserable and unhappy."

For several days Bonaparte was full of care and anxiety for love. "That all depends upon circumstances," I replied; "if a man has no ambition, it is a happy destiny; but he who has ambition, such as you possess, should never make a love match, for by that step he cuts away the ladder by which he can alone ascend to any height."

"True, true," said he, "very true. I was two days without seeing her. The third she wrote to me, saying that I would go and see her, as she was very ill--very ill. Well, I went."

"I like not speaking of myself," he continued, "and above all, on those subjects which draw us into our second childhood, but I feel the want of confidence, as at this particular moment I feel rather miserable."

"When I called upon Naddi, the widow was not at home, so that I had all the danger of a *let a tale go* through with a girl madly attached to me. For a considerable time I kept at the other end of the apartment, replying bravely to her charming and innocent rallery; but suddenly she began to weep, and reproach me for my indifference. I endeavored to console her, and, in my excitement, I promised everything, even to devote my life to her happiness; when Naddi, rising from her seat with dignity, laid her hand upon the hilt of my sword, emphatically exclaimed, 'swear by that, that you will make me your wife.' A cold shudder passed through my frame; the bright and ambitious dreams of my whole life passed vividly before my eyes; I saw my madness, and happily had strength enough to be honest, and I answered her I could not swear."

"These devils of women," continued the young Napoleon, "stop at nothing when they once love. Notwithstanding my refusal, she continued her endearments, but quickly disengaged herself, I had courage to rush from her presence. A few steps from the house I encountered her mother, to whom I related all. She thanked with gratitude, and entreated of me never to see Naddi again. 'I know,' she continued, 'that I am dooming my poor child to misery; but I cannot help it, if she really loves her, she will die; but if I could return her reason, the journey, and the new scenes she would encounter might effect her cure.'"

"If you prove to me," I said, "that you really approve of my conduct, and esteem me your friend, you will accept from me what will enable you to return to Florence. But you must not tell Naddi to chase me altogether from her heart. Oh! Louis, if you had seen how she grasped my hand, and looked her tearful thanks. This morning I sent her three months' pay, which I have borrowed without knowing how I shall be able to repay it."

And yet this man, without fortune, almost in rags, seen among the whole army, and was seated upon a throne, which raised him above the rank of the Emperor. I have since occasionally spoken to him of Naddi.

"Ah!" he said upon these occasions, "that was one of the truest and strongest loves I have ever felt; but then I was poor lieutenant."

I find it difficult to stop myself on this subject, for I would fain continue to speak of my hero--of the man whose mind was so grand, and yet so simple--who understood every thing in a word, and saw all around him in a glance. Still he had his dreamy hours, and sleepless nights, but he quickly aroused himself, and became strong and more active, re-animating Europe by his example, and embellishing Paris--that Paris of which he was so proud; and fatiguing whole regiments with his indefatigable exertion, only leaving off his horse to mark down the new victories which he had achieved over his enemies. Yet the moral is a painful one--what is fame and glory?

Beautiful Scene. J. R. Chandler, editor of the Philadelphia United States Gazette, describes the following exquisite scene. It is more beautiful, more touching than the purest dream. He was walking in the late watches of the night, when the stars were yet bright in the heavens--the earth fresh and fragrant with the night dew, and the great ocean, on whose shores he wandered, pealing its solemn hymn through the starlight darkness, when he saw this holy scene. There was no star in the heavens brighter than the fervent aspirations of the simple hearted sailor; and his prayer was in God's ear, louder and more sublime than the roaring of the great ocean.

At length a repeated remark drew my attention towards the bank; looking over the verge of which I saw an elderly man in a rough dress, with a small boy by his side.

"Why not?" inquired the sailor. "Because you called me so earnestly, and bade me meet you on the beach, as soon as I could get dressed."

"It should not have been neglected," said the old man. "I should think," said the boy, with an appearance of great deference, "that you could not have been so long."

"No, I had not risen when I called you." "There was a pause of a few moments, which the old man broke by saying--"We are quite early, and perhaps the duty omitted by both of us in the house may be discharged for to day. We will scarcely work the worse for it to day." The speaker then took off a glazed hat, and displayed a head slightly bald; the long mottled hair upon its sides trembled in the slight breeze that set in from the ocean. The younger also laid aside his hat, and both knelt upon the sand. In a solemn tone the father commenced his morning's devotion. I could not catch all the words; but here and there, when speechfulness, marked the request, I could hear each syllable. The language was