

CONFEDERATE DIPLOMACY IN MEXICO

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For

CHARLOTTE LENZNER LEIGHTON

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## CHAPTER I

### SOUTHERN ASPIRATIONS TOWARD MEXICO

#### IN THE ANTE BELLUM PERIOD

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the twenty-five year history of designs on the part of the South to acquire Mexican territory. In May, 1861, the dispatching of southern diplomatic envoys to Mexico climaxed this long-standing interest in the neighboring republic. At the same time, the southern states, as is well known, realized that in order to maintain their position in Congress, new areas would have to be incorporated, particularly, territory that would provide for the admittance of future southern states.

Long before the Civil War, the southern states had realized the importance of state sovereignty. The infringement upon the rights of state sovereignty was a perpetual source of discontent and animosity between the North and South. John C. Calhoun, the proponent of states' rights, clearly stated his views in the doctrine of nullification. He argued that since the Union is the creation of states and not the states of the Union it stands to reason that the former will be subordinate to the latter in case there is a dispute as to respective powers; for the creator is always greater than the creature. The South was anxious to have an alliance with the West and to win over that section to its own political views. Such a union would insure the southern planters and the western farmers against objectionable measures advocated by northern manufacturers and would give them a controlling voice

in the Federal government. The key to the southern expansionist problem was to be found in Mexico. Mexico was to be the lever by which the South could attain its goal.

The causes of the Mexican War were many, but the main incentive was the desire to obtain additional territory. When Texas was annexed, Mexico promptly broke diplomatic relations with the United States. Mexico had never recognized the independence of Texas although this independence had been maintained for more than eight years, and during that time no attempt had been made to assert authority over the rebel state. Nevertheless, in annexing Texas, the United States had seized territory belonging to Mexico, according to the view held by the government of the latter country.

In the summer of 1845, General Zachary Taylor was sent with an army into Texas with instructions to take a position on or near the Rio Grande. He did not advance that far at first, but camped about one hundred and fifty miles from the Rio Grande. When President Polk saw that Slidell's mission would fail, he ordered Taylor to move over to the Rio Grande. After this was done Taylor received a message from the Mexican commander demanding that he withdraw. As Taylor refused to comply with the demands of the Mexican general, the latter made an attack on the American forces and killed some of them. Polk had decided upon war before news of this skirmish reached Washington, but this attack gave him the opportunity to charge Mexico with having begun the conflict. Taking advantage of this turn in affairs, he now asked Congress for a

declaration of war on the ground that the Mexican troops had invaded the United States. Congress thereupon fell in line with the suggestion and declared that we were at war by the action of Mexico.

By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico agreed to accept the Rio Grande as the Mexico-Texas boundary and to cede New Mexico and California to the United States. For this cession the United States agreed to assume all claims held by its citizens against Mexico and pay that country an additional sum of fifteen million dollars.

It is of utmost importance to point out that after the Mexican War there was an intense desire to annex a part or the whole of Mexico. The guilt cannot be placed solely on the South. The North was equally as guilty in their aspirations for additional territory. However, this chapter will deal mainly with the desires of the southern states, through their statesmen, to incorporate Mexican territory into the Union from the period 1848 to 1861.

The territorial acquisitions of the Trist treaty by no means satisfied a large group in the United States. The sentiment of manifest destiny, which had already begun to show itself before the war, increased under the stimulation of the victories won by the American army in the fields of Mexico. An outcry was raised in all parts of the country for the annexation of the entire republic of Mexico. The view that the struggle, once begun, should not close until the empire of Mexico, as well as Texas, was added to the Union, gradually became the conviction of an increasing number.

An excellent opportunity soon presented itself to satisfy the unappeased appetite for domain. The offer was presented by the agent of the state of Yucatan in Washington. Since the days of the war for Mexican independence, this Peninsula had experienced many vicissitudes. In 1846 it declared its independence from Mexico and sent a representative to the United States. During the war between the United States and Mexico, it had assumed, as far as possible, a neutral position. But while this war was going on, a formidable Indian uprising forced the government to call for outside assistance. Justo Sierra, the Yucatecan agent, presented a formal communication to James Buchanan, Secretary of State, from the governor of Yucatan offering "dominion and sovereignty" over the peninsula in return for military aid in saving the whites from extermination.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, President Polk began the preparation of a message on the subject. After calling attention to the deplorable conditions in Yucatan, and stating that the Yucatecan government had offered in return for the succor requested to transfer the "dominion and sovereignty of the peninsula" to the United States, the message pointed out the fact that similar offers also had been made to England and Spain. He then stated that he was of the opinion that it would be contrary to the established policy of the United States to permit a transfer of this dominion and sovereignty to Spain, England, or to any other European power.<sup>2</sup> This message occasioned

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1. William R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Vol. VIII, Mexico, pp. 1075-1078, Document No. 3757; Justo Sierra, Yucatan Commissioner to the United States, to James Buchanan, Secretary of State of the United States.

2. James Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol. IV, p. 581.

a long debate in the Senate. Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi saw the matter in the same light, and he went a step further in sounding the British alarm. He expected England to follow up the occupation of Yucatan by the immediate seizure of Cuba. In his speech in the United States Senate he said:<sup>3</sup>

Long has England been sighing for this prize. Let her ascertain once that our government has resolved to cower before her, and to permit her to colonize again on this continent, and she will own Cuba and Mexico up to the Rio Grande, in less than ten years from the present time.

Apparently Foote was in favor of permanently retaining Yucatan and of purchasing Cuba. Senator Bagley of Alabama rejoiced in the opportunity of obtaining permanent hold of the peninsula, and was confident that manifest destiny would soon lead to the annexation of all Mexico.<sup>4</sup> Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, in supporting this measure, declared "Whenever the question arises whether the United States shall seize these gates of entrance from the south and east, or allow them to pass into the possession of any maritime power, I am ready to declare that my step will be forward, and that the cape of Yucatan and the island of Cuba must be ours."<sup>5</sup> The opponents of the measure claimed that the expansionists had resolved to re-open the Mexican War with the view of absorbing the entire country of Mexico. The whole affair was soon dropped for news of an armistice between the opposing forces in Yucatan reached the United States before the bill came to a vote. This development did

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3. Cong. Globe, 30th Cong., I Sess., p. 596.

4. Ibid., p. 636.

5. Ibid., p. 599.

not abate the expansionists ardor for additional territory. The halls of Congress continued to resound with just as exaggerated expressions of destiny as could be found in the periodicals of the time. In 1855, Boyce of South Carolina told the House:<sup>6</sup>

In some quarters the cry is for Cuba; in others, for the Sandwich Islands; some are looking to another partition of Mexico.

In 1856 Senator John Bell of Tennessee declared that a group in the United States was expecting the "better class of Mexican inhabitants to appeal to some foreign power to assume the task of governing the country."<sup>7</sup> Obviously this foreign power could be none other than the United States. Sam Houston of Texas stated in 1856 that the Mexicans did not have the capacity to govern themselves and that "the day is coming when an influence must control and enlighten these people."<sup>8</sup>

These illustrations have indicated the spirit of expansion during the decade preceding the Civil War. It did not, of course, pervade the entire nation. This spirit of expansion was especially strong in the Democratic party, and this party had charge of the foreign affairs of the country during most of the manifest destiny period. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to assert that the emotion of manifest destiny shaped the entire foreign policy of the United States toward Mexico between 1848 and 1861.<sup>9</sup>

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6. Cong. Globe, 33 Cong., II Sess., p. 91.

7. Cong. Globe, 34 Cong., I Sess., pp. 114-115.

8. Cong. Globe, 35 Cong., I Sess., pp. 736-737.

9. J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico, p. 29.

Political disorders in Mexico constitute another factor which should not be overlooked in this connection. The achievement of Mexican independence was followed by forty years of almost constant revolution. From 1822 to 1867 the form of government changed nine times and the country was ruled by thirty-nine different administrations who gained their power by violence and retained it only so long as they had superior physical force at hand.<sup>10</sup> The struggle was one between the conservatives, who, aided and dominated by the clergy, sought to establish a highly centralized government - and the liberals, who desired federal republican institutions. The situation was even more complicated by selfishness and greed for power on the part of the leaders of both factions. This chaotic condition tended to influence American policy toward Mexico by giving plausibility to the contention that the annexation of a part or even the whole of the country would be a benevolent act. Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia expressed the opinion that "the Mexicans had a right to the institutions of the United States at the close of the Mexican War, and if these institutions had been given them then, subsequent years of suffering and misfortune would have been avoided."<sup>11</sup>

The possibility of European intrusion in the western hemisphere exerted considerable influence upon the policy of the United States for more than a decade after the Mexican War. It may have often been used for political purposes or as a cloak to cover expansionist

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10. J. H. Latané, The United States and Latin America, p. 193.

11. Cong. Globe, 35 Cong., II Sess., pp. 541-542, Speech of January 24, 1859.

designs. Manifest destiny never pointed to the acquisition of a region so unmistakably as when a conservative, undemocratic European power revealed an inclination to interfere in American affairs.

What more effective means of keeping Europe out of Mexico was there than the seizure of the country for themselves?

Many leaders in the South, who had expected to obtain a larger cession of territory from Mexico in 1848, were still hoping for an opportunity to get an additional cession to maintain the balance of power with the North. Their desires were not characterized so much by the expansionist's theory of force, but rather to obtain territory by peaceful purchase if possible. One of the most important questions in American policy relating to Mexican relations in the first half decade after 1848 was that of the Tehuantepec isthmian transit. At the time, it was regarded as the most practicable route for a trans-isthmian communication between California and the East, because so many feared that a railroad across the mountains to the west of the Mississippi would be too difficult to construct. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec, however, was part of the Mexican domain.

Tehuantepec first entered the field of the United States and Mexican diplomacy during the negotiations which terminated the Mexican War. Nicholas P. Trist, who had charge of those negotiations, was authorized to pay thirty, instead of fifteen, million dollars for Upper and Lower California and New Mexico, provided he could also obtain the right of passage and transit over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.<sup>12</sup> The Mexican commissioners refused the proposal

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12. Manning, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-209 (in Art. VIII of the "Project of a Treaty" given to Trist by Buchanan).

outright, saying that they had granted the concession to English subjects, of whose rights Mexico could not dispose.<sup>13</sup>

The concession referred to by the Mexican Commissioners has become known as the Garay Grant. It was given to Jose de Garay, a private contractor, in March, 1842. Due to numerous revolutions and changes in presidents, which hindered progress, Garay transferred his title to two Englishmen, Manning and MacKintosh. These were the men the Mexican commissioners were referring to in their discussions with Trist.

The two English gentlemen later transferred their concession to the Hargous brothers of New York. Thus citizens of the United States, not the American government, had at last acquired the coveted Tehuantepec grant. In April, 1850, the Hargous company sold shares to several residents of New Orleans, of whom Judah P. Benjamin was a principle stock holder. The newly formed coalition was called the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company.

All this transferring of titles and concessions, only caused uneasiness in the Mexican government. In the recent war it had lost half of its territory and every movement which could be considered at all aggressive on the part of its neighbors was therefore interpreted as the beginning of the last act in the drama of Mexico's absorption. The New Orleans company thus proceeded in an atmosphere charged with suspicion and every step it took was likely to be misinterpreted. The Mexican Senate had reviewed the entire Tehuantepec affair and declared null and void the new grant on May 22,

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13. Rippy, op. cit., p. 49.

1851.<sup>14</sup> Notice of these orders were served to the company's employees, and steps were immediately taken to put an end to all operations. When news of the affair reached Secretary Webster, he protested the action of the Mexican Congress as unconstitutional. At the same time, Webster instructed Robert P. Letcher, the United States Minister to Mexico, to use all his efforts to block the decision of the Mexican Congress.<sup>15</sup> The New Orleans company continued to dispatch vessels to the isthmus, and rumors spread abroad to the effect that five hundred laborers were being raised for the purpose of taking possession by force.<sup>16</sup> To all appearances a deadlock had now been reached. The government of the United States seemed to be prepared to support the claims of its citizens by force if necessary. Mexico was just as determined to resist what she considered an encroachment upon her territory.

In July, 1852, the Congress of the United States decided to take a hand in the dispute. Mason of Virginia brought forward a resolution calling upon the President for the correspondence relating to the Tehuantepec negotiations and it was given unanimous approval. President Fillmore complied, and the correspondence was sent to the committee on Foreign Affairs. On August 30, 1852, this committee submitted along with their report three resolutions:

- (1) That it was not compatible with the dignity of the

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14. Correspondence Regarding Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Webster to Letcher, August 18, 1851, Sen. Ex. Doc., 32 Cong., I Sess., Ser. 621, No. 97, pp. 93-95.

15. Correspondence of Letcher to Webster, October 22, 1850. Ibid., pp. 41-44.

16. Ibid., pp. 93-95.

United States government to prosecute further the subject by negotiation;

- (2) That any renewal of negotiations should only be acceded to in case the proposition from Mexico was not inconsistent with the demands of the United States;
- (3) That the United States stood committed to the protection of the rights of its citizens, and should Mexico fail to reconsider her position concerning the Tehuantepec grant, it would become necessary for the United States to take remedial action.<sup>17</sup>

Senator Brooke of Mississippi introduced at the same time an informal resolution proposing that Mexico be given only until March 1, 1853, to put the American holders in possession of their property and franchises.<sup>18</sup>

As this session of Congress closed on August 31, 1852, no action was taken except to table the resolutions, but the matter was given considerable attention during the early part of the next session. Senators Mason of Virginia, Downs of Louisiana, and Brooke of Mississippi, were the chief proponents of the measures.<sup>19</sup>

In view of this, it is not unlikely that these factors influenced

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17. Cong. Globe, 32 Cong., I Sess., p. 2485.

18. Ibid., p. 2486.

19. Cong. Globe, 32 Cong., II Sess., pp. 134-147, 160-170.

Mexico to bestow a new concession upon the Tehuantepec Company. This was signed on March 21, 1853.<sup>20</sup>

In the summer of 1853 the relations between the United States and Mexico appeared to be approaching another crisis. The predatory raids of Indians from the northern side of the boundary were increasing in violence. Mexico was demanding the fulfillment of Article XI in the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty obligations and indemnity for depredations which the Indians were committing. Difficulties arose in surveying the boundary laid down by this treaty and culminated in a grave dispute regarding the southern limits of New Mexico. The loss of this contested area by the United States would mean the loss of a feasible route for a southern Pacific railway. Once again the noisy proclamations of manifest destiny were heard from the expansionists. Mexican troops had begun to advance along the northern frontier, and the United States was reenforcing its army in the southwest. The situation was extremely critical.<sup>21</sup>

There were several factors that tended to induce both countries to attempt a peaceful settlement. In Mexico there was a complete lack of funds by which to carry on a war. The Pierce administration did not want to endanger the solidarity of their party by embarking on another state of war. That party had fought the war of 1846-1848, and did not intend to lose their ascendancy in Congress which now consisted of a two-thirds majority in the House and thirty-seven

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20. Sen. Ex. Doc., 35 Cong., I Sess., pp. 21-26, No. 72, "Isthmus of Tehuantepec."

21. J. Fred Rippy, "Indians of the Southwest", in The Hispanic American Historical Review, August, 1918, p. 366.

out of sixty senators.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, there was a reasonable prospect of obtaining everything it desired by purchase. Another favorable point was that the unscrupulous Santa Anna was now president and in dire need of funds to sustain his government. With this line of reasoning, the administration sent James Gadsden to Mexico in July, 1853. He had been a Nullifier in 1829 and a Secessionist in 1850; and he was a friend of Jefferson Davis, sharing all this great Southerner's eagerness for a southern Pacific railway.<sup>23</sup>

Gadsden was not long in convincing the Mexicans of the enormous benefits which could be derived from the sale of their domain. At first Gadsden offered twelve millions, but the Mexican commissioners insisted upon a larger amount. After considerable discussion, it was finally decided that the United States would pay fifteen million dollars. One-fifth was to be paid upon the exchange of ratifications and the remaining four-fifths in monthly installments of three millions each. The signing of the document took place on December 30, 1853, and Gadsden set out immediately for Washington.<sup>24</sup>

The pact was sent to the Senate on February 10, 1854. Consideration of the treaty did not begin until March 9. It then occupied much time in the Senate until April 25, when, after every line of diplomatic correspondence even remotely connected with the negotiations had been discussed, it was finally accepted by that

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22. Ibid.

23. Paul N. Garber, The Gadsden Treaty, p. 74.

24. Ibid.

body. Senator James Mason of Virginia led a group of senators composed of Hunter of Virginia, Adams of Mississippi, Rusk of Texas, who advocated the ratification of the pact in its original form.<sup>25</sup>

The treaty was then submitted to the House of Representatives on June 21, 1854, and referred immediately to the Ways and Means Committee. On the following day the chairman of this committee introduced a bill making the appropriation which it required.<sup>26</sup>

The advocates of the bill were preponderantly southern. Finally on June 28, the appropriation was approved by a vote of 103-62.<sup>27</sup>

On June 29, the president placed his signature to the agreement. The next day Almonte, the Mexican Minister, was handed a draft for seven million dollars, the first installment under the treaty.<sup>28</sup>

At the beginning of his administration, President Buchanan soon made it plain that an attempt to acquire territory was to be a main feature in his Mexican policy.<sup>29</sup> He was inclined to concur with the advice of his friend Robert Toombs who recommended Judah P. Benjamin for the Mexican mission.<sup>30</sup> Benjamin, like Toombs, had a special interest in the Tehuantepec transit route, and also in plans

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25. Cong. Globe, 33 Cong., I Sess., p. 207.

26. Cong. Globe, 33 Cong., I Sess., Part 2, pp. 1476-1479.

27. Ibid., p. 1536.

28. Ibid., p. 1564-65.

29. J. Fred Rippey, The United States and Mexico, p. 213.

30. James Morton Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations, p. 245.

for the purchase of Sonora, which many regarded as necessary to the development of the region of Arizona.<sup>31</sup> Whatever his inclinations, Buchanan decided to appoint John Forsyth of Alabama as minister to Mexico. Soon after his inauguration, Buchanan, largely under the influence of Senator Benjamin, who was the attorney for the new Louisiana Tehuantepec company, resumed negotiations for territory and transits which were desired in a single treaty.<sup>32</sup> Forsyth was authorized to pay Mexico twelve or fifteen million dollars for Lower California and a large portion of Sonora and Chihuahua, together with the perpetual right of way and privilege of transit on any route of inter-oceanic communication across Mexican territory.<sup>33</sup>

In these negotiations, he was assisted by Benjamin and Emile la Sere, president of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company, who journeyed to Mexico in hope of obtaining modifications of the terms of their earlier grant. Forsyth was instructed to make use of Benjamin and La Sere in obtaining the desired cession, and, at the same time, to cooperate with them in securing modification of the terms of their grant.<sup>34</sup>

The American minister reluctantly approached the Comonfort government with offers for the purchase of territory, but he resented the agents of the Tehuantepec company and refused to assist them.

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31. Ibid.

32. Callahan, op. cit., p. 247.

33. Pierce Butler, Judah P. Benjamin, pp. 186-187.

34. Ibid., p. 188.

They, nevertheless, succeeded in procuring a private contract with Mexico and returned to the United States to denounce Forsyth.<sup>35</sup> Forsyth asked permission to offer twelve million dollars to the Mexican government for a treaty of transit and commerce with the ultimate goal of "Americanizing" the territory.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the distinguished Alabamian was desirous of obtaining extra territory to incorporate possibly in the union.

Forsyth was unsuccessful in his efforts because the Mexican government demanded more compensation, which the United States refused to allocate. In January, 1858, a revolution occurred in Mexico and Zuloaga was placed at the head of the conservative government. Forsyth immediately recognized the new administration and bid for a territorial cession; but once more he was met with disappointment.<sup>37</sup> President Buchanan was now determined to recommend vigorous measures. In his annual message to Congress in 1858 he advocated that Congress "grant the necessary power to the President to take possession of a sufficient portion of Mexico, to be held in pledge, until the injuries of the citizens of the United States should be redressed and their just demands satisfied."<sup>38</sup> Since the Mexican government was not likely to have sufficient funds to settle its obligations, this step probably would have meant occupation of a permanent nature.

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35. James Morton Callahan, "The Mexican Policy of Southern Leaders Under Buchanan's Administration", Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1910, p. 139.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 140.

38. James Richardson, op. cit., V, p. 521.

The President went on to say that the lawlessness of the Indians and the Mexicans preying upon the inhabitants of Arizona threatened to break up our communications with the Pacific. He then announced that "the only possible remedy for these evils was the assumption of a temporary protectorate over the northern portions of Sonora and Chihuahua."<sup>39</sup>

The President's recommendations were referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations which brought in a bill embodying his ideas. Considerable debate followed, and the bill was defeated by a vote of 31 to 25.<sup>40</sup>

On December 27, 1858, William M. Churchill was sent as a special agent to investigate conditions in Mexico. He sent back favorable reports and a memorandum signed by President Juarez in which this chief expressed his willingness to cede, not only Lower California, but perpetual right of way over Tehuantepec.<sup>41</sup> Thereupon, Robert M. McLane of Maryland was appointed Minister and authorized to offer four million dollars for Lower California and transit privileges across northern Mexico and Tehuantepec, a portion of which was to be retained to satisfy the claims of American citizens against Mexico.<sup>42</sup> On January 4, 1860, the President submitted the treaty to

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39. Ibid.

40. Cong. Globe, 35 Cong., I Sess., pp. 1118-1143.

41. Callahan, Mexican Policy of Buchanan, p. 142.

42. Rippey, The United States and Mexico, p. 220.

the Senate. The measure received only occasional attention during the next four months, and on May 31, it was rejected by a vote of eighteen to twenty-seven. A subsequent motion to reconsider was agreed to on June 27, but it was decided to postpone further discussion until the assembling of the next congress.<sup>43</sup>

In the meantime, events in the United States rendered improbable any reconsideration of the McLane-Ocampo treaty by the Senate. The secession of South Carolina started a movement which turned public attention to new questions and soon took from the Senate almost all the members who had voted for the treaty.

#### Conclusions

The character of the ante-bellum relations with Mexico after 1848 was typified by the efforts of our government to obtain more satisfactory arrangements for the holders of the Tehuantepec concessions; the desire for better railway routes across northern Mexico; redress for the predatory Indian raids against citizens of the United States and the attempt to purchase part of the Mexican national domain. Closely connected with these desires was the ever-present idea among southerners of securing Mexican territory for future states in the Union.

The real significance of these relations with Mexico lies in the fact that it gave invaluable experience to the statesmen of the South. These southern men, Judah Benjamin, John Forsyth, Robert Toombs, William Marcy, and many others, were later destined

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43. Ibid., p. 223.

to be in charge of the foreign affairs of the Confederacy. They gained invaluable experience in their contacts with the social, political and economic conditions of Mexico. When the Civil War came, the southern diplomats were in readiness to assume the task of entering upon relations with Mexico.

## CHAPTER II

## JOHN T. PICKETT'S MISSION TO MEXICO

In seceding from the Union the South had based its hope of success on two beliefs; one, that the Northerners would prove indifferent fighters, and the other, that the dependence of Europe on the South's cotton supply would compel early recognition of independence, and, if the war continued long, intervention.<sup>1</sup> Upon examining their first contention, it can be observed that it was not just idle boasting. Contemporary opinion of Europe in 1861-63 was that the North was the side destined inevitably to defeat. Not only military experts, but also statesmen, held this conviction. Why did these European statesmen, diplomats and journalists regard a Confederate triumph as inevitable? The circumstance that the North outnumbered the South in population, domestic wealth, and commerce did not seem to these observers the ultimate consideration. Surface ratios like these did not necessarily determine events. The struggle was an unequal one, if considered merely from the standpoint of men and materials; here the North clearly possessed the advantage. It was similarly unequal, from the standpoint of military strategy, and here the South unmistakably wielded the upper hand.

In 1861, the states which formed the Confederacy had 9,000,000 souls; those that remained loyal to the Union had 21,000,000.<sup>2</sup> The figures for the South, it is true, comprised 3,000,000 negroes, but

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1. John H. Latané, A History of American Foreign Policy, p. 361.

2. Owsley and Chitwood, A Short History of the American People, Vol. I, p. 696.

these increased its military power, for they could provide a service as cooks, workers on fortifications and entrenchments -- labor that white recruits performed in the Federal army. Negroes also gave the South its supply of laborers and farmers at home, thus freeing the whites for military service. It is therefore fair to say that the proportion of Northern to Southern men for war service stood at about two to one.

In considering the military problems confronting the two sides, the South possessed an advantage. The point is that the North was fighting on the offensive, the South on the defensive. One side was encroaching on unfamiliar territory, comprising a vast area and a hostile people, and the other was on its own friendly soil merely to repulse the invader. It is a fact that in waging an offensive war it requires a greater superiority in men, usually two to one, or five to three. Therefore, by these comparisons, the South would theoretically have the advantage as far as manpower and strategic location were concerned.

It was in this light that Europe had prophesied the North's undertaking as an impossible military task. In fact during the first two years of the war from Bull Run to Gettysburg, the South had decidedly the advantage in the field and very few foreign observers believed that the North would ever succeed in conquering the South.<sup>3</sup> Other facts than an inferiority in military strength must therefore hold the secret of Confederate failure!

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3. Latane, op. cit., p. 361.

The basis for their second contention, that cotton is king, was also accepted at the time. A classic example of the South's sentiments concerning the potentiality of cotton is evident in Senator Hammond's speech in the United States Senate on March 4, 1858:

If there were no other reason why we should never have war, would any sane nation make war on cotton? Without firing a shot, without drawing a sword, should they make war on us we could bring the whole world to our feet. What would happen if no cotton were furnished for three years? England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her, save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war on cotton. Cotton is King! The last power has been conquered. Who can doubt, that has looked at recent events, that cotton is supreme?

With the strains of this melody ringing in her ears, the South was unequivocally convinced she could bring the world to its knees, thereby prompting European intervention. They staked their existence upon the infallibility of this idea, the power of cotton. It was the foundation upon which the South built its diplomacy.

At home its social, political and economic institutions rested upon cotton; abroad its diplomacy centered around the well-known dependence of Europe, especially England and France, upon an uninterrupted supply of cotton from the southern states.<sup>5</sup> Until well into the third year of the war, the Confederate government and its people relied primarily upon this power of cotton to coerce rather than persuade England and France to interfere in some way with this struggle in America. This interference might take the form of a peaceful mediation, it might be armed intervention or an outright

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4. Cong. Globe, 35 Cong., I Sess., Part I, pp. 960-961.

5. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 1.

recognition of the independence of the South, but the ultimate result would be the ending of the war and the independence of the Confederacy.

The Southerners, imbued with rationalism of the 17th and 18th centuries, were thoroughly convinced of their contentions that without cotton the world would sink into oblivion. This idea grew out of the transfer by Europeans from the use of Indian to American cotton after the invention of the cotton gin.<sup>6</sup> American cotton was superior and yet cheaper than the Indian cotton.<sup>7</sup> Starting with practically no exportation in 1790, the American planters saw their cotton surpass Indian cotton in the European industries by 1796 and practically supersede it by the end of the War of 1812.<sup>8</sup> In the period from 1840-1858, Europe depended upon the South for three-fourths to five-sixths of her cotton supply.<sup>9</sup> The South also was fully conscious from the very beginning that all of the cotton used in the northern industry came from Dixie, and that the cotton industry of the North was its largest and most lucrative business.

The British in an attempt to free themselves from this dependence on southern cotton, made a series of attempts to get back to East Indian cotton. Agents were sent to India to study the situation. Parliament appointed a standing committee on Indian cotton and conducted long hearings on the prospects of cotton in India as a

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6. Ibid., p. 2.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 4.

9. E. N. Elliott, Cotton is King and Pro-Slavery Arguments, comprising the writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe, and Cartwright.

substitute for American cotton. They argued that by establishing a rival source in India, American cotton would finally be put off the market, and not only would England hold the whips, but slavery would inevitably disappear.

These reports and hearings all lamented the dangers of England's continued reliance upon the United States for so large a proportion of her cotton. Also the English were not unmindful of the possibility that in the event of a Civil War in the United States, this single source of supply could lay prostrate English towns whose very existence depended upon this commodity.

After a great deal of effort by the government and interested individuals had proved futile, the London Times conceded defeat in 1860. Indian cotton could never compete with its American rival. "It yields", said that organ, "more waste, that is -- loses more in the process of spinning due to the dust and trash collected with the lint. The working people prefer the American yarn as it spins better and does not break so easily and cause delay in work."<sup>11</sup> It also declared in disgust that it was utterly impossible to introduce an improved system of cotton culture among the Indian peasants. Government agents had tried and failed completely. They had gone into the peasant village and demonstrated the iron plow of the improved English type. The populace had been amazed and overawed by the marvelous execution of this beautiful new implement -- in fact, so overawed that when "the agent's back was turned, they took

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10. De Bow's Review and Industrial Resources (A Journal devoted to commerce, agriculture, political economy), Vol. 34, pp. 509-526.

11. Ibid., p. 510.

it, painted it red, set it up on end, and worshipped it."<sup>12</sup>

So England, a seventh of whose population -- that is, between four and five million -- depended upon this staple for their very existence. Should any dire calamity befall the land of cotton, a thousand merchant ships would rot idle in the docks; two million mouths would starve for lack of food.<sup>13</sup>

As to France, while the volume of her consumption of cotton was only one-fifth of that of Great Britain, the South knew that the cotton industry was one of her largest and employed a much larger number of operatives in proportion to the raw material utilized than did England or the United States.<sup>14</sup> They also knew that it was one of the most profitable industries in France, and constituted a chief item of her export.<sup>15</sup>

Satisfied that the great nations of England, France and the United States could not live without southern cotton, southern statesmen at length came out boldly and proclaimed the fact to the world. The conclusion of the South was that in case of secession and the consequent interruption of the cotton supply, England and France would intervene in behalf of the South in order to obtain the precious cotton for their mills, and thereby save their countries from bankruptcy.

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12. Ibid.

13. The London Times, October 7, 1858.

14. Owsley, op. cit., p. 14.

15. Ibid.

After the war began, the South did not propose to wait for the Federal blockade proclaimed by Lincoln to become slowly effective. They proposed to meet the blockade at the threshold with restrictive measures which would produce an immediate cotton famine. England and France would have no cotton with which to stave off the cotton famine and postpone intervention.

On May 10, 1861, a bill passed the provisional Congress prohibiting trade with the United States.<sup>16</sup> Not only was the North to be reduced by cutting off the supply of cotton, but Europe was to be effected by this indirect method, for it was through the North that Europe had largely obtained southern cotton. But in the late fall of 1861 it began to appear that Europe was still not sufficiently reduced by the cotton shortage to intervene in the near future; and the agitation to burn the present crop and not produce any further supply until recognition should come, commenced. When it was realized that not enough cotton could be shipped through the Federal blockade to stave off the famine in England and France, which was expected to bring intervention, and when at the same time the Confederate government had no other means with which to purchase war material abroad, the embargo was gradually relaxed, and it finally disappeared in 1862. After 1863 the King Cotton idea practically disappeared, as far as coercing Europe -- though it was still hoped to bankrupt the United States. The power of cotton in diplomacy had been put to test and, as we know, failed to move England and France to intervene. The South had overestimated the potency of cotton.

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16. Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, Vol. I, pp. 205-6.

Thus far a basis has been shown by which the Secessionists contended diplomacy. When the war began, the South sent diplomatic agents to Europe and, though not widely known, to Mexico. In Mexico the Confederate diplomats pursued a triple course: first, with the Jaurez government; secondly, with northern Mexico under Vidaurri and Pesqueira; and by far the most significant, with the French monarchical party and Maximilian, who were allied with the Conservative elements in Mexico. Each of these relations will be dealt with in turn.

As might not appear on first thought, Mexico from many angles was one of the most vital problems with which the Confederacy had to grapple. Why was this emphasis laid on Mexico as the focal point of Confederate diplomacy? It was the only neutral country from which the Confederates could not be cut off by the blockade; it also provided a good market for the sale of cotton and purchase of war supplies. Matamoros was considered the one great leak in the Federal blockade which could never be legally stopped. But of paramount importance, Mexico offered still other possibilities than those of neutrality and trade. It might be induced to recognize the South. Of this, however, there was little hope in view of the South's record of expansion and filibustering at the expense of Mexico. Later, after the French intervention in Mexico occurred, the Confederate leaders hoped this would force Napoleon from his neutral position into an active alliance with the South. In accomplishing these aims, southern agents were compelled to enter into competition with Federal agents, which proved to be an interesting tug of war.

In order to give a clear understanding to the attitude and relations of the Confederacy to Mexico, it is of paramount importance to delve into the political background of Mexico from 1836-1861. Texas had been acquired by the United States in 1848. The Mexican war, as mentioned in Chapter one, did not abate the desires of southerners to obtain additional territory. We soon acquired an immense domain by the Gadsden purchase. The same desire for territory prevailed in Buchanan's administration. Mexico, in order to circumvent the desires of America, began to appeal to Europe to aid them against "the Colossus of the North."

As early as 1853 when the notorious Santa Anna assumed the presidency, overtures were made to the French government with the hope that France would establish a hereditary monarchy in Mexico.<sup>17</sup> The year 1853 was a year of impending crisis in the Near East, and so Louis Napoleon, now Emperor of the French, could not enter upon any ambitious program in Mexico at a time when war clouds were looming in Europe.<sup>18</sup>

Similar appeals were made to England in which Santa Anna even assured Doyle, the British minister, that he would resign his position to any foreign prince whom the European powers would support upon the throne of Mexico. He was met with a blank refusal by the Foreign Office in London.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867, p. 319.

18. Ibid., p. 321.

19. Ibid., p. 325.

In May of 1853 Santa Anna sounded the Prussian minister with regard to the possibility of securing a corps of 5000 men from the Prussian government, only to find that the government at Berlin did not share the view of its representative at Mexico City.<sup>20</sup> An appeal was made to Spain in 1854 but the situation at the Spanish Court was unfavorable. A revolution had broken out and a less reactionary ministry which came to power would have no part of this scheme.<sup>21</sup>

In August of 1855, even the faintest hope of the establishment of a monarchy was dashed by the Revolution which unseated the Mexican dictator. The Liberals guided by Comonfort and Juarez had once again swung the pendulum of political gravity toward liberalism. The ultra-conservatives, who were always the strongest supporters of the monarchical idea, were deprived of governmental influence.

In early October of 1856, a Frenchman by the name of Radepon appeared in Paris as the emissary of the Mexican monarchists. He was sent by a rich Mexican and his mission was to secure from France a small amount of military aid. He had two interviews with the Emperor himself and the project of founding a monarchy in Mexico was discussed in detail.<sup>22</sup>

With the beginning of 1858, the reactionaries under General Zuloago, regained control of the government. They lost little time in making official overtures to France once again. At the very time of these offers, Napoleon III had already held the famous interview

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20. Ibid., pp. 323-324.

21. Ibid., pp. 325-326.

22. Ibid., pp. 349-350.

of Plombieres in 1858 with Cavour, and the stage was set for the quarrel with Austria, and the active support of Sardinia in its strivings for the unification of Italy. For the next two years the Italian question occupied the mind of the French Emperor. Upon consummation of the Italian venture, the eyes of Napoleon turned longingly to the New World. The Second Empire was now ready to embark upon an episode which in the end would spell their doom. The repeated offers of the Mexican conservatives for monarchical rule no longer fell on impervious ears. Now the only thing lacking was a motive, and in the game of international politics this is always the least worry. The basic motives of the French were many.

Among other things, the intervention was a definite attempt to test the strength of the Monroe Doctrine. Napoleon III was determined to revindicate Europe's right to meddle in New World affairs and he seized the most opportune moment for such a test -- the years when our nation was wholly absorbed in the life and death struggle of the Civil War. He not only desired a well-situated foothold for France in the New World, but hoped that the setting up of a French Manchuko in Mexico would strike a mortal blow at the further spread of democratic and republican principles.

The French intervention is also very valuable as a case study of financial imperialism: the use of armed intervention to help international bankers collect debts and obtain concessions. Politicians had their old worthless obligations made good by new loans totaling hundreds of millions of francs foisted upon the gullible French public, dazzled by the idea of brilliant conquest and the

supposed honesty of their financial leaders. The story is all there: the French people themselves paid heavily in order that a small clique of court favorites might make hay while the sun shone.

The third interventionist motive was religion. The Mexican constitution of 1857 destroyed medieval Church privileges, separated Church and State, secularized cemeteries, and confiscated Church properties. The conservative emigres swarmed about various courts of Europe searching for sympathetic ears. They were amiably received by Princess Eugenie who wept over the sufferings of the Church in Mexico.

The astute Napoleon III was quick to seize this wonderful opportunity. He could expiate for his sin of driving the Austrians from Italy by placing the Archduke Maximilian of Austria on his puppet throne and redeem himself to the Pope by restoring Catholicism in Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

The immediate occasion for foreign intervention was the refusal or inability of Mexico to meet her financial obligations. Mexico had signed a convention with Great Britain in 1842, and subsequently with Spain and France, recognizing her indebtedness and agreeing to set aside a percentage of the customs duties at Vera Cruz and Tampico for the payment of interest and principal, but as a result of repeated revolutions and changes in government she had defaulted in her payments. Matters were brought to a climax in July, 1861, when President Juárez (recaptured Mexico City in January 1861)

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23. The reasons for the French intervention in Mexico are discussed in detail in John M. Taylor, Maximilian and Carlotta: A Story of Imperialism; H. M. Flint, Mexico under Maximilian; Jose' Luis Blasio, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico.

published a decree suspending for two years all payments on the foreign debts.<sup>24</sup> The European powers demanded the repeal of this decree within twenty-four hours and when the demand was not complied with they immediately severed diplomatic relations and began making preparations for bringing pressure to bear on Mexico by means of a joint military expedition.<sup>25</sup> This moratorium on debt service gave the European powers the excuse they had been seeking for several years.

The government of the United States, which had just entered the Civil War, regarded the contemplated intervention with suspicion. William H. Seward, the Secretary of State, distrusted all three nations. The newly appointed minister to Mexico, Thomas Corwin, together with Seward, worked out a scheme for checking the European advance. Before discussing this scheme, it will be necessary to give a brief sketch of Thomas Corwin because in many ways his actions in Mexico destroyed many Confederate attempts to achieve their goals.<sup>26</sup> Corwin's career had been a conspicuous one, being elected Congressman in 1830, Governor of Ohio in 1840, United States Senator in 1845, and appointed Secretary of the Treasury in Fillmore's Cabinet. Such were the rewards that had crowned Corwin, largely as a result of his fight against the Southerners in Congress. If President Lincoln had searched the country to discover the one man

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24. John H. Latane, The United States and Latin America, p. 199.

25. Latane, American Foreign Policy, p. 401.

26. Addison P. Russell, Thomas Corwin, A Brief Sketch, passim.

most hateful to the South he could have made no better selection. Corwin's hatred of slavery and the part he played in obstructing its extension made his name detested throughout Dixie. His most important qualification as Minister to Mexico was that he had opposed the Mexican War. He had sided with Mexico in a war with his own country. His speeches in the Senate concerning this episode had metamorphosed him into one of the heroes of Mexico. Here was a Yankee after Mexico's own heart! Later on his intentions toward Mexico were not so admirable, that is, from the Mexican's point of view. His instructions were that he was to prevent Mexico from entering into any treaty or alliance with the Confederacy, and not to permit its territory to be used in any way that would advance the interests of the South.<sup>27</sup> Both of these objects were accomplished by Corwin!

The scheme worked out by Seward and Corwin in order to stave off European intervention was that the United States would assume payment of the interest on Mexico's foreign debt, the money so advanced to be secured by a mortgage on the public lands and mineral rights in Lower California, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa.<sup>28</sup> The treaty also had a clause inserted which said that all these lands and mineral rights should become absolute in the United States in case Mexico defaulted after six years.<sup>29</sup> The question now arises as to Corwin's sincerity toward the Mexican nation. Was this the

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27. Seward to Corwin, No. 2, Mexican Instructions, April 6, 1861, Series 1117, Sen. Doc., 37th Cong., II Sess., pp. 64-65.

28. H. Ex. Doc., 37th Cong., II Sess., No. 100, Corwin Treaty, Series 1136, pp. 22-23.

29. Ibid., pp. 15-18.

man that Mexico had so implicitly trusted as the safe guardian of her independence and civilization?

The Corwin treaty, which would have had such significant historic consequences, never went into effect. This plan met with objections from England and France, as well as from the Senate of the United States, which passed a resolution, February 25, 1862, declaring the opinion:

That it is not advisable to negotiate a treaty that will require the United States to assume any portion of the principle or interest of the debt of Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

This effectually put an end to Seward's and Corwin's scheme.

In pursuance of the London Convention of October 31, 1861, Vera Cruz was occupied in the early part of 1862 by a combined force. The British and Spaniards soon began to suspect the French of ulterior designs, approved the action of their representatives and ordered the immediate withdrawal of their forces and agents from Mexican soil. The government of Louis Napoleon by the withdrawal of England and Spain, attempted to take advantage of the condition which the War of Secession had reduced the government of the United States, and reinforced its Mexican expedition.

To coincide with the above mentioned events, the Confederate government had dispatched John T. Pickett as special agent of the Confederacy to Mexico City in May, 1861. The web of Confederate diplomacy was being spun so as to entangle the French upon their arrival in Mexico.

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30. John Latane, The United States and Latin America, p. 203; J. M. Callahan, Evolution of Seward's Mexican Policy, p. 33.

On May 17, 1861, Robert Toombs, the Confederate Secretary of State, notified John T. Pickett that he was to represent the Confederacy with the Juárez government in Mexico.<sup>31</sup> Pickett was overbearing, sharp tongued, trouble hunting, and completely lacking in the arts of diplomacy.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, it must be conceded that Pickett was forceful, energetic, shrewd and could size up the drift of events rather successfully, though he was lacking in the tactfulness to profit by his insight.<sup>33</sup> He was one of those adventurers about whom legends gather.

Colonel Pickett<sup>34</sup> was a well known Southern man, born in Kentucky in 1823 and educated at West Point. He had fought in the Hungarian insurrection along side of General Louis Kossuth and for this service he had been commissioned a general.<sup>35</sup> Later he joined the Lopez expedition to Cuba, and was in command against the Spanish regulars at the Battle of Cardenas.<sup>36</sup> Finally, he settled down as United States Consul at Vera Cruz and became the right-hand man of the American ministers in their attempts to annex Mexican territory.<sup>37</sup>

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31. Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, Series 2, Vol. III, pp. 202-6 (Hereinafter cited as O. R. N.)

32. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 92.

33. Ibid., p. 93.

34. Pickett's title of "Colonel" came from his service in the Lopez Expedition.

35. This biographical sketch of Pickett is in the preface of O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 16.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

On the eve of secession, he was appointed secretary of the Confederate Peace Commission to Washington in 1861, after which he was sent as a commissioner to Mexico.<sup>38</sup> Knowing Pickett's record and ambitions, Davis deliberately appointed him to represent the Confederacy with the Juárez government.

In his instructions, Pickett was to establish diplomatic relations with the Juárez government at once. Although he was not to insist upon formal recognition of the Confederacy unless the Juárez government was ready for it, he was to assure them of the readiness of his government to conclude a treaty of amity, commerce and navigation on terms equally advantageous to both countries.<sup>39</sup> He was also instructed "to feel the pulse of merchants and ship-owners on the subject of privateering, and if a desire be manifested, to obtain letters of marque and reprisal from this Government, you shall have the power to grant such commissions."<sup>40</sup>

Something more of an amusing character was given in his instructions.

It will be well in your relations with the Mexican government to remind them that Southern statesmen and diplomats, from the days of Henry Clay to the present time, have always been the fast friends of Mexico, and that Mexico may always confidently rely on the good will and friendly intervention of the Confederate States to aid her.<sup>41</sup>

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38. Ibid.

39. Toombs to Pickett, Mexican Instructions, May 17, 1861, James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, p. 21.

40. Ibid., p. 23.

41. Toombs to Pickett, Mexican Instructions, May 17, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 206.

Pickett was also instructed to circumvent all the efforts of the American minister in Mexico from obtaining special concessions in that country.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Toombs said:

The grant to the United States of commercial, political, or territorial advantages which are not accorded to the Confederate States, would be regarded by this Government as evidence of an unfriendly disposition on the part of Mexico toward the Confederacy. It will be your duty to watch the American representative at Mexico and prevent the Mexican Government from taking any step at his suggestion which would be prejudicial to the interests of the Confederate States.<sup>43</sup>

The Confederate agent was given the authority to grant letters of marque and reprisal to any trustworthy Mexican merchant, and he was to obtain the privilege of allowing the prizes captured by these privateers to be brought into Mexican ports.<sup>44</sup> He was also furnished with means or credit to purchase arms and munitions of war.<sup>45</sup>

In July, 1861, Pickett was received by the Mexican government in Mexico City. Foreign Minister Zamacona granted him an interview of a confidential nature, assuring him of the friendship and neutrality of the Juárez government.<sup>46</sup> As yet the Mexican government could assume no other attitude, since the United States had not agreed to the Corwin Treaty by which Mexico would receive financial

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42. Ibid., p. 203.

43. Ibid., pp. 203-204.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 206.

46. Pickett to Toombs, July 28, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 226-227.

aid for the purpose of strengthening its government at home and abroad in return for the public lands of northern Mexico.<sup>47</sup> Juárez was fearful of committing any offense that might invoke the anger of the South until he could be sure of aid from Seward's government. So, for the time being he granted Pickett this interview.

In August, 1861, Pickett dispatched a note to Zamacona inquiring as to the authenticity of a rumor that Mexico had granted permission for the transit of American troops from California to Arizona across Sonora.<sup>48</sup> Zamacona replied that the rumor was true, but in making the grant Mexico had not supposed that the Confederacy laid claims to Arizona. He went so far in his written reply to Pickett's question, not only to assure him of Mexico's friendship and neutrality, but to inclose a letter to Toombs acknowledging his letters of credence. This was the nearest to an official recognition ever accorded to the Confederacy by any neutral.<sup>49</sup> These mendacious assurances soon came to light when the Union was allowed to continue moving its troops across this area. Pickett was now convinced, perhaps, that Corwin had ruined the chances of the Confederacy even before he had arrived in Mexico, by the propaganda that it was the South which had always been the aggressor toward Mexico and that the Confederacy would seize the entire land when it won its independence.

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47. H. Ex. Doc., 37 Cong., II Sess., No. 100, Corwin Treaty, Series 1136, pp. 22-23.

48. Pickett to Toombs, August 1, 1861, as cited in Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 101.

49. Pickett to Toombs, August 28, 1861, Ibid., p. 101.

If Pickett thought the South stood no chance of gaining recognition from the Juárez government, then it was only a matter of time before he would be asked to leave the country. Even before his interview with Zamacona, he had lost his temper and became indiscreet in his expressions and conduct. When anyone asked him if the Confederacy was seeking recognition by the Mexican government he replied, "Not at all, my business is to recognize Mexico, provided I can find a government that will stand still long enough."<sup>50</sup> This statement must have really endeared Pickett to the Mexican people! He also remarked, "in case the rumor is true that the United States has been granted permission to send troops across Mexico into Arizona, then thirty thousand Confederates will cross the Mexican border from the Confederacy."<sup>51</sup>

Corwin and his agents spread this news about Pickett's utterances to every important official in the Juárez government. The one thing the Mexicans dreaded from the South was annexation of their lands and Pickett had threatened just this thing. In order to circumvent these mistakes, Pickett began to assure the Mexicans that "the South had enough territory and wouldn't accept an entire Mexican state as a gift."<sup>52</sup> In fact he actually proposed a retrocession of territory to Mexico which had been acquired from her by the United States.<sup>53</sup> These statements of Pickett's were only a political trick to combat

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50. Pickett to Toombs, July 11, 1861, Ibid., p. 99.

51. Ibid.

52. Pickett to Toombs, August 1, 1861, Ibid., p. 100.

53. Ibid.

the American minister's propaganda. That he never meant a word of it was explained in a letter he wrote to Secretary Toombs.<sup>54</sup>

In September, Pickett entered into further correspondence with Zamacona, protesting again against the right of transit of American troops across Sonora. He attempted again to convince the Mexican Foreign Minister that the Confederacy no longer harbored aggressive tendencies toward the Mexican domain.<sup>55</sup> By this time Pickett was definitely convinced, if he had not been from the beginning, that the Confederacy stood no chance of gaining recognition nor the neutrality of the Juárez government. He deemed it to the best interests of the South to ally itself with the Church or Conservative Party in Mexico. He considered this party the only one of decency, and that it would shortly come to power under the auspices of their European allies, who were preparing to intervene in Mexico because that government had defaulted in its payments of foreign debts.<sup>56</sup> Pickett was correct, because later the Church Party gained a new lease of power and Juárez was chased to the mountains.

Now that he had definitely broken with the Juárez government and was on friendly terms with the Church Party, Pickett urged his government not to hesitate in seizing Mexican territory. He told Toombs "I am now prepared to advocate any alliance which may tend to

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54. Ibid.

55. Pickett to Zamacona, September 28, 1861, Ibid., p. 101.

56. J. Fred Rippey, The United States and Mexico, p. 233.

check the expansion of the North."<sup>57</sup> In December, Colonel Pickett was asked to leave Mexico, not as a diplomat who had incurred disfavor, but as a common street brawler, charged with assault and battery. He was imprisoned for thirty days and, after bribing the judge and various other members of the government, obtained his release.<sup>58</sup> He therefore left Mexico as soon as he could find passage north.

Upon arriving in Richmond, Pickett learned, much to his chagrin, that the Confederate government was in complete ignorance of his movements from June to December, a period of six months. It was not until November 30, that Pickett's first dispatch of June 15 was received.<sup>59</sup> The Richmond government knew practically nothing about what Pickett had done or advised during his stay in Mexico. Why did not the Southern government receive his correspondence? Pickett learned that every letter he wrote bearing the slightest appearance of being official was first forwarded to Juárez and it was not sent to Richmond until Juárez released it. Also it seems that Juárez gave Corwin these dispatches to read after he had finished with them.<sup>60</sup> While Pickett was saying uncomplimentary things about the Mexican people and incessantly urging his government to seize Mexican territory, Juárez was probably reading his

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57. Pickett to Toombs, November 29, 1861, loc. cit., p. 105.

58. Ibid.

59. Browne to Pickett, November 30, 1861, O. R. N., Sec. 2, Vol. III, pp. 302-303.

60. Pickett to Davis, January 11, 1864, loc. cit., pp. 107-109.

dispatches. When he told Zamacona and Juárez that the Confederacy had more land than it could possibly use and would give Mexico back her provinces acquired by the United States, it must have amused these two gentlemen to no end.

#### Conclusion

Pickett, then, had not accomplished the purposes for which he was sent to Mexico. He had entered into negotiations in a confidential way, but did not win the friendship nor even the neutrality of the Juárez government. This failure was due partly to Mexico's suspicion of the South and in part to Pickett's lack of diplomatic ability. Probably the most important reason was the falling into the hands of the Juárez government of Pickett's dispatches which expressed his real opinion of the Mexican and his constant urging to annex Mexican territory. Another reason of equal importance was the counter diplomacy and propaganda of the United States' Minister to Mexico, Thomas Corwin, and his agents. In his instructions concerning Mexico, Corwin was told to convince the Mexicans that the safety of Mexico depended upon the restoration of the Union, for the success of the Confederacy would be followed by the conquest of Mexico. He was to convince Juárez that nothing should be done to aid the South if Mexico wanted to sustain herself.<sup>61</sup> He made the most of Pickett's mistakes and thereby ingratiated himself with Juárez. When the Mexican president read Pickett's dispatches,

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61. Seward to Corwin, No. 2, Mexican Instructions, April 6, 1861, Series 1117, Sen. Doc., 37th Cong., II Sess., pp. 64-65.

Corwin could very easily say that the United States held no such ulterior motives toward Mexico. To back up his statement, he could point to the proposed Corwin loan, by which Mexico could pay off its foreign obligations and in return for this favor, they only had to give the United States a mortgage on Sonora, Sinaloa and Chihuahua, the richest mineral provinces in Mexico. Corwin kept the idea of a loan dangling before Juárez and the Mexican president was convinced that the United States was the real benefactor of Mexico. By these methods, Corwin merely finessed Juárez out of recognizing Pickett and his government.

## CHAPTER III

## THE MISSION TO NORTHERN MEXICO

When it became obviously useless to expect encouragement from the Juarez government, Confederate agents looked elsewhere in Mexico for aid. The objectives which they were most desirous of obtaining were arms and supplies, extradition of criminals and deserters, and the nullification of the privilege which the United States had of transporting troops over Mexican territory. These considerations were to be found in the northern provinces of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, and Sonora. These same states could act as a medium through which European goods could be carried into the South or cotton could be carried out. The northern states in Mexico were not unmindful of the tariffs which they could levy on the incoming and outgoing goods; Mexican middlemen foresaw profit in handling these goods. In fact practically all the trade of the Mexican border states was with the Confederacy, and consequently a considerable part of the revenue of the governors of these border states was derived from the duties upon this trade.<sup>1</sup>

Besides this economic basis for friendship toward the Confederacy, these border states had definite political reasons for friendship with the South. As previously pointed out, Mexico was always in a condition of successive revolts against the central Government. In 1861 many of the northern states in Mexico had governments of their own and were not affiliated in any way with

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1. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 119.

the central government of Mexico. It was only a matter of course for these northern provinces to ally themselves with some outside power in order to have protection against a central government that had too much authority.

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, American and Southern interest in Sonora and Chihuahua assumed great importance. Both governments watched anxiously any movement toward the Rio Grande and military officials of both sides courted the favor of Governor Pesqueira of Sonora. In pursuance of its aims, the Confederate government sent Colonel James Riley on a mission to Sonora and Chihuahua to secure neutrality and the right of transit for Confederate troops across this area. Colonel Riley states that he was "received, accredited, and treated by the Governor of Sonora as a Colonel in the Confederate Army." He states also that this act was the "first recognition of the Confederate States of America by any foreign power."<sup>2</sup> The capture of this letter by the Federal authorities provoked a protest to Governor Pesqueira. This protest was answered by the governor, in which he denied that he had "offered more than neutrality or such other rights as could be granted without failing in the duties of hospitality."<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Corwin wrote Seward that he "feared the recent discoveries of mineral wealth in Sonora and Chihuahua were sought by the Confederacy for the purpose of aiding the military attacks and

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2. Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. 50, Part I, p. 825 (cited hereafter as O. R. A.).

3. Ibid., pp. 1117-1118.

increasing the economic strength of the Confederacy."<sup>4</sup> In fact, this can be taken as further evidence as to why Corwin wanted to consummate the proposed loan to Mexico, so as to insure that these areas would fall into Union, instead of Confederate, hands in case Mexico defaulted in her payments to the United States.

Another influential Mexican in this region was Santiago Vidaurri. Due to the weakness of the central government, together with his wide popularity, he had united Coahuila and Nuevo Leon. This enabled him to wield great influence in his own and neighboring states.<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1861, Vidaurri had been a supporter of Juarez, but he later became dominated by the ambition to establish his own republic in northern Mexico.<sup>6</sup> The value of such a man to the Confederate's schemes soon became apparent. Vidaurri was first approached in the interest of border security, before the value of the region under his control was fully realized. Juan A. Quintero, a native of Cuba who had spent several years in Mexico and knew Vidaurri personally, was dispatched to Monterey to come to some agreement with Vidaurri concerning border security.<sup>7</sup> Although not an accredited political agent of the Confederacy, Quintero was instructed to urge upon Vidaurri the "necessity of putting an end to

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4. Corwin to Seward, No. 4, May 18, 1861, Series 1117, Sen. Doc., 37th Cong., II Sess., pp. 82-84.

5. Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Mexico, 1516-1887, Vol. V., pp. 698-705.

6. Ibid.

7. Toombs to Quintero, May 22, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 217-218.

the planned predatory expeditions against the citizens of Texas."<sup>8</sup>  
 In return, Vidaurri was to be assured that the "Confederate States will use every effort to insure the maintenance of peace on the borders by enforcing on its citizens the observations of international law and the duties of good neighborliness."<sup>9</sup> When Quintero had his interview with Vidaurri, the latter received him cordially. Vidaurri assured him that the states over which he ruled, Neuvo Leon and Coahuila, as well as the border states to the north, were favorably disposed toward the Confederacy.<sup>10</sup> Not only did Vidaurri agree to the question of border security, but he told Quintero that he was anxious to ally himself with the Confederacy, and if necessary actually join the Confederacy and annex to the new nation the states under his control.<sup>11</sup> Quintero also found, to his great satisfaction, unlimited supplies of lead, copper and saltpeter in the state of Nuevo Leon.<sup>12</sup>

When Juan Quintero returned to Richmond, he was cordially received by the new Secretary of State, R. M. T. Hunter, who commended him on his mission to the governor of Nuevo Leon.<sup>13</sup> It was decided in view of Quintero's skill, prudence, and ability, to give him a

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8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Quintero to State Dept., August 19, 1861, as cited in Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, pp. 121-122.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Browne to Quintero, September 3, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 116-117.

permanent commission in Monterey, Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

On September 3, 1861, Quintero was instructed by William M. Browne, Assistant Secretary of State, to establish friendly relations with Governor Vidaurri, and "to assure his Excellency that the President cordially reciprocates his expressions of friendship and good will toward the Confederate States."<sup>15</sup> Browne continued to say that "the President is of the opinion that it would be imprudent and impolitic in the interest of both parties to take any steps at present in regard to the proposition made by Governor Vidaurri in his confidential communications with you in reference to the future political relations of the Confederate States with the northern Provinces of Mexico."<sup>16</sup> It is well worth our while to pause and evaluate the reasons why President Davis thought it "imprudent and impolitic" to annex Vidaurri's northern states. In the North, the war was fought to uphold the Union, not because it loved the South so dearly that it could not bear the thought of the Southerners leaving the fold, but because of national pride in power and size.<sup>17</sup> The position of the Confederacy was quite different. Secession from the Union abated, for the moment, all desires to expand in most of the leaders.<sup>18</sup> There was no longer the balance of power to be

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14. Ibid.

15. Browne to Quintero, September 3, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 253-254.

16. Ibid.

17. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, pp. 123-124.

18. Ibid.

considered as in former days when new territory was sought for slave states. However, even if Davis and his cabinet had desired to annex the border states of Mexico, it would have possibly brought the Confederacy into a state of war with Juarez. Certainly Corwin would not stand idly by! President Davis was too shrewd to attempt this sort of folly.

Quintero was urged to inquire whether "the Mexican Government had given permission to the United States to transport troops and munitions of war across Mexican territory."<sup>19</sup> If this were true, Vidaurri was to be persuaded to use his influence to prevent the passage of these American troops.<sup>20</sup> Quintero was also requested to make a careful inquiry as "to the possibilities of purchasing small arms, powder, lead, sulphate, and all other articles necessary for the Confederate Army."<sup>21</sup>

Upon his arrival in Monterey, Juan Quintero was once again cordially received. He had little difficulty in obtaining Vidaurri's promise that he would not only protest against the passage of United States troops, but that he would address communications to the governors of other Mexican states urging them to take similar action.<sup>22</sup> Quintero was evidently impressed with the power that

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19. Browne to Quintero, September 3, 1861, O. R. N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 254.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of The Confederacy, Vol. II, p. 151.

Vidaurri had over the northern provinces of Mexico. He stated in a letter to Hunter that "Governor Vidaurri is much feared by the people of the interior states. For years he has ruled supreme and the states of Nuevo Leon and Coahuila have been prosperous and happy under his administration. He is our friend and ally."<sup>23</sup>

During the next three years, Quintero resided in Nuevo Leon where he worked in close co-operation with the generals in command of the western subdistrict of Texas. It was their duty to purchase military supplies for the South in Mexico or in Europe which would come through Mexico.<sup>24</sup> These agents were also to sell or trade cotton for munitions and other needed supplies. To facilitate this trade, Major Simeon Hart was sent to Texas to purchase cotton and then exchange it for supplies in Mexico.<sup>25</sup> Other cotton agencies were set up, but due to lack of organization they were not beneficial. In August of 1863, the trans-Mississippi department under Kirby Smith set up the Cotton Bureau with Lieutenant Colonel W. A. Broadwell as head for the purchase of cotton to ship to Mexico in exchange for supplies.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult for anyone to estimate the volume of this, but the trans-Mississippi department was supplied from this source almost from the beginning of the war. The supplies

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23. Quintero to Hunter, November 10, 1861, as cited in Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 125.

24. J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico, p. 236.

25. Secretary of War Randolph to Hart, November 14, 1862, O. R. A., Ser. I, Vol. 15, p. 866.

26. General Orders No. 35, August 19, 1863, O. R. A., Ser. I, Vol. 22, Part II, p. 953.

of powder, lead, cattle, mules, and flour were furnished directly by the Mexican states.<sup>27</sup> Some idea of its volume may be gained from the fact that the revenue which Vidaurri collected at Piedras Negras was over \$50,000 a month; that \$1,200,000 had been collected there in 1862-1864.<sup>28</sup> There were several other crossings where goods entering Mexico from the Confederacy or leaving Mexico for the Confederacy paid duty to the Mexicans. The revenue alone on these goods is estimated at \$125,000 a month.<sup>29</sup> This trade was kept open during the entire war. Quintero, in conjunction with Generals Kirby Smith, Hamilton Bee, J. E. Slaughter, and Colonel James Riley maintained the necessary friendly relations with the border states in Mexico to make this trade possible.

In the spring of 1864, Vidaurri was forced to flee to Texas because Juárez, having been driven from Mexico City by the Imperialist forces, occupied Monterey with his followers.<sup>30</sup> It was feared that Juárez would turn over all the supplies and munitions to the Union government. Quintero rose to the occasion and approached Juárez' Secretary of War about this border trade, and much to his amazement, he was given assurances that the Confederate trade and commerce would remain intact.<sup>31</sup> Actually, Quintero found Juárez for all practical

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27. Owsley, op. cit., p. 128.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Quintero to Benjamin, April 3, 1864; Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 143.

31. Ibid.

purposes well disposed toward him and the revenue he offered from the volume of trade. Juárez needed the revenue as badly as did Vidaurri before him, and as a result amicable relations with the Confederates were a matter of necessity. Quintero accomplished what Pickett failed to do.

In September, 1864, when Juárez was forced out of Monterey by the French and Imperialist forces, Quintero and his agents entered the final phase of their relations with Mexico.<sup>32</sup> Quintero proved just as shrewd and successful in his relations with the Imperialists as he had been with Vidaurri and Juárez.

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32. Quintero to Benjamin, September 5, 1864, Ibid., pp. 143-144.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONFEDERATE DIPLOMACY IN MAXIMILIAN'S MEXICO

This chapter deals with the Confederate attempts to gain recognition from the French monarchial party which was trying to place Maximilian on the Mexican throne. As previously mentioned in chapter two, the motives employed by the French for their intervention in Mexico were many. To say that these predatory schemes of Napoleon III fitted in perfectly with Confederate diplomatic objectives is indeed a gross understatement.

Since Louis Napoleon was the avowed friend of the Confederacy, it was natural to expect that he might extend aid to them, especially if his Mexican undertaking could be promoted thereby. Many important men of the South agreed that Napoleon's ambition to establish Mexico as a French vassal was doomed to failure unless the South, friendly to the idea, should be permanently established as an independent state. Davis had something definite to offer France, and Napoleon in return could do much for the South. Was it a mistaken policy to promote the Maximilian usurpation in Mexico, in exchange for French recognition of the Confederate Government? The Confederate statesmen accepted this as good international politics. Thus the quickest way to a possible diplomatic triumph in France lay through Mexico. The chief reliance of the South was henceforth placed upon Napoleon.

It was on the basis of this conviction that Slidell had, in

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1. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, p. 527.

his two interviews of July<sup>2</sup> and October,<sup>3</sup> 1862, offered Napoleon the support of his government in the Mexican venture in return for recognition of the South. Now was the time to seal an alliance with the Confederacy or get out of Mexico. But Napoleon's fear of war with America, had left the Emperor unmoved from his position of neutrality.

Slidell and his government were not completely checkmated by this failure to move Napoleon to do what appeared so plainly to be the only correct and sensible thing. This new plan of Napoleon to set up Maximilian as puppet Emperor to reign over Mexico was the opportunity the South had eagerly awaited. Now the Confederate government planned to approach Napoleon through Maximilian. The South had to try and convince Maximilian of the necessity of a French alliance with the Confederate government in order to make his puppet throne secure from American interference.

In pursuing this new course of diplomacy, I de Haviland, a friend of Jefferson Davis, obtained an interview with the archduke Maximilian.

After the interview, de Haviland wrote Slidell that the emperor expressed the warmest possible interest in the success of the Confederate cause. He said that he considered it identical with that of the new Mexican Empire, in fact so inseparable, that an acknowledgment of the Confederate States of America by the Governments of the

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2. Slidell to Benjamin, July 21, 1862, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 475.

3. Slidell to Benjamin, October 28, 1862, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 577.

Mexican crown became unconditional. Maximilian was particularly desirous that his sentiments upon the subject should be known to the Confederate President.<sup>4</sup>

Slidell on receipt of this letter saw Mr. Gutierrez de Estrada, chief of the Mexican mission, which was offering Maximilian the Mexican crown. He told Slidell that he had introduced de Haviland to Maximilian and that he felt sure that the report of Maximilian's views were true. Slidell wrote Benjamin, now Secretary of State, that he had seen the paper in which the archduke set forth the different measures which he considered essential to the successful establishment of his Government; the recognition of the Confederacy headed the list.<sup>5</sup>

Maximilian, then, unquestionably regarded the recognition of the Confederacy by France as a condition precedent to his acceptance, but he was hurried on by Napoleon against his judgment and failed to exact this condition of the French monarch before he accepted the Mexican throne. He came to Paris with that point still unsettled.

On the rumor of Maximilian coming to Paris, Slidell sought an interview with him to follow up the lead given him through deHaviland and Estrada. As soon as the Archduke arrived in Paris, Slidell wanted an interview with him. Days passed and no notice came requesting him to have an audience with the Emperor.<sup>6</sup> Slidell was then

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4. Slidell to Benjamin, December 3, 1863, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 968-969.

5. Ibid., p. 969.

6. Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 1063-1065.

convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that Napoleon had checked Maximilian's plans for recognition.<sup>7</sup>

The reasons behind Napoleon's action in refusing to allow Maximilian to accord recognition to the South were that he wanted to insure himself against any failure of the Confederacy, but more especially against an immediate attack by the North. Napoleon hit upon the idea of consummating a bargain with the United States.

On March 16, 1864, Slidell wrote Benjamin that Mercier, the French minister in Washington who was now in Paris on leave, "declares that at his parting interview with Lincoln he was told by Lincoln that he was authorized to say to Maximilian that his government in Mexico would be recognized by that of Washington, on the condition, however, that no negotiations should be entered into with the Confederate States."<sup>8</sup>

Slidell believed this bargain was responsible for Maximilian's refusal to see him in Paris.<sup>9</sup> The following excerpt from a letter to Secretary Seward from Ambassador William L. Dayton, stationed in Paris, gives further proof of Napoleon's action:<sup>10</sup>

Towards the Confederate States the policy of Maximilian will be that of strict neutrality. By the advice of the Emperor Napoleon, he will abstain from recognizing the independence of the Southern Confederacy, or entering into any diplomatic relations with it until France shall

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7. Slidell to Benjamin, March 11, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 1057-1059.

8. Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 1064.

9. Mason to Slidell, March 16, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 1048.

10. William L. Dayton to Sec. Seward, March 21, 1864, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1864, Part III, p. 54.

have done so. The rumors, therefore, of an early recognition of the Confederate States by France and Mexico, and an alliance between the latter empire and the Southern Confederacy, are altogether devoid of foundation.

Just at the moment when this rumor was spreading that a bargain had been consummated between Napoleon and the United States, there came the resolutions of the United States Congress, which declared "that the movements of the governments of France, and the threatened movement of an Emperor for the government of Mexico, improvised by the Emperor of France, demand by this republic, if insisted upon, war."<sup>11</sup> But Napoleon did not let this news swerve him and he remained convinced that the United States would sooner or later accord recognition to Maximilian.

It must be conceded that Seward's diplomacy in this matter was efficacious. If Napoleon wished to believe the rumor that the United States would recognize Maximilian in Mexico if France would not recognize the Confederacy, then why destroy the goose that lays the golden eggs? The United States had not the slightest intention of attacking France in Mexico as long as the Civil War was in progress. It might prevent Napoleon's recognizing the South, then after the war, Mexico could be attended to.<sup>12</sup>

The formal acceptance of the crown of Mexico by Maximilian took place April 10, 1864 at Miramar in the presence of the Mexican deputation. The next day the Emperor and Empress of Mexico, as they

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11. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1864, Part III, p. 76.

12. Owsley, op. cit., p. 548.

styled themselves, set out for their new dominions by way of Rome, where they received the blessing of the Pope.

In the latter part of October, 1863, another approach was being made to Maximilian by means of a regularly appointed mission to Mexico to succeed Pickett. General Juan Almonte, Mexican regent and throne warmer for Maximilian, wrote his friend Vidaurri of Nueve Leon that

he had been urging upon Napoleon the necessity of recognizing the South. In this correspondence he indicated that a Confederate minister should be dispatched to Mexico to the Court of Maximilian because the latter desired to recognize the Confederacy.<sup>13</sup>

On the basis of this information and that received from Slidell, de Haviland and Estrada, President Davis sent a message to the Confederate Senate advising that body to send a minister and envoy extraordinary to the Maximilian government in Mexico.<sup>14</sup> The message was then referred to the committee on Foreign Affairs and after due consideration the report came back to the Senate.<sup>15</sup> With a favorable vote in the Senate for the resolutions, William Preston was appointed as the new envoy to Mexico.<sup>16</sup> Preston's instructions were to make a treaty of friendship and commerce on the basis of free trade, and likewise a free passage across Sonora and Chihuahua to the Pacific.

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13. J. F. Ripoy, The United States and Mexico, p. 243.

14. Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States, Vol. III, p. 493.

15. Ibid., p. 511.

16. Ibid., p. 519.

Also a treaty of alliance of ten years duration for mutual defense against the United States was to be negotiated.<sup>17</sup>

Preston proceeded to Havana, Cuba to await the arrival of Maximilian. He did not think it wise to attempt to negotiate with Almonte, acting head of the Imperial Government in Mexico, as any agreement thus reached might be repudiated by Maximilian. While waiting in Havana for the arrival of the Archduke, Preston communicated with Slidell, informing him of his instructions with reference to Mexico.<sup>18</sup> Slidell, in his reply, discouraged him with an account of his failure to obtain an interview with Maximilian while in Paris.<sup>19</sup> Preston then dispatched Captain R. T. Ford, a member of his party, to Mexico, to get in touch with Maximilian, while he himself determined to go on to Europe. Here he would confer directly with Mason and Slidell.<sup>20</sup>

Ford proceeded to Mexico and interviewed the Foreign Minister of Maximilian, and not having any success withdrew.<sup>21</sup> In the meantime, Preston corresponded with the regent Almonte, and Marquis de Montholon, French representative at Mexico City, with reference to his coming to Mexico. These men hurriedly wrote him in London that he should not come to Mexico as Confederate minister under present

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17. O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 988-990.

18. Slidell to Benjamin, March 17, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 1964--(Tells of writing Preston).

19. Mason to Benjamin, April 12, 1864, O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 1082-1084.

20. Benjamin to Preston, June 30, 1864; Richardson's Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, p. 650.

21. Helm to Benjamin, August 21, 1864, (with inclosures of Correspondence to Ford), O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, p. 1007.

conditions.<sup>22</sup> Slidell wrote Judah Benjamin that he had warned the leading Mexicans in Paris that Maximilian was making a great mistake by not recognizing the South; for without the friendship of the South, Maximilian would be powerless to resist Northern aggression.<sup>23</sup>

Benjamin answered Slidell by saying that the French Emperor and Maximilian were resorting to self-deception if they were unable to see that the safety of the new empire in Mexico was solely dependent upon the South's ability to interpose a barrier between the Mexican territory and the northern states.<sup>24</sup> Finally when none of these insinuations had induced the French Emperor or his vassal to make a move, William Preston interviewed the Mexican ministers in Paris, and Slidell again interviewed Drouyn de Lhuys, the new minister of foreign affairs. They both hinted broadly that the North and South would soon make peace based upon separation and an offensive and defensive alliance, for the purpose of suppressing monarchical institution in Mexico.<sup>25</sup> In other words, unless France and the new government in Mexico recognized the Confederacy, the South would turn against the imperial schemes and aid the North in overthrowing them. To further substantiate this assertion and prove it was no idle threat, it is necessary to look in the debates of the Confederate Congress.

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22. As quoted in Frank L. Owsley, op. cit., p. 542.

23. Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864; O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 1063-1064.

24. Benjamin to Slidell, June 23, 1864; O.R.N., Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 1156-1157.

25. As quoted in Frank L. Owsley, op. cit., p. 554.

In the Confederate Congress on November 7, 1864, at a time when there were plans for an armed immigration of Confederates into Mexico to sustain Maximilian,<sup>26</sup> resolutions were offered by Murray of Tennessee, in opposition to European intervention in Mexico and to all apparent violations of the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>27</sup> Murray introduced the following joint resolution:<sup>28</sup>

The Congress of the Confederate States do resolve, that we have no sympathy with the efforts to establish a monarchy in Mexico, and that we will not, directly or indirectly, aid in the establishment of a monarchy on the continent of America.

The next day Mr. Foote of Mississippi, introduced the resolution "that the Confederate government refrain from sending any more diplomatic agents to foreign countries and those agents residing in foreign countries should be recalled."<sup>29</sup>

On November 28, 1864, Foote offered the following resolution:<sup>30</sup>

Resolved that the Government and people of the Confederate States have as deep an interest in the firm and inflexible maintenance of what is known as the Monroe Doctrine as the Government and people of the United States can possibly have; that their right to assert and maintain that doctrine if they choose to do so is unquestionable.

The motion was tabled until November 30, at which time the House of Representatives resumed consideration of the bill.<sup>31</sup> On

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26. Mr. Romero to Mr. Seward, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1865, Vol. III, pp. 498-99.

27. Edward McPherson, Political History of the United States During the Great Rebellion, p. 617.

28. Ibid., p. 618.

29. Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States, Vol. III, p. 261.

30. Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States, Vol. VII, p. 308.

31. Ibid., p. 312.

the motion of Mr. Foote, the resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and hence its burial.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, this echo still resounded in the halls of the Confederate Congress. On January 12, 1865, Mr. Orr, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs reported the following resolution:<sup>33</sup>

Resolved, that commissioners shall be authorized to bring into view the possibility of cooperation between the Confederacy and the United States in maintaining the principles and policies of the Monroe Doctrine.

About two weeks later, De Jarnette of Virginia, offered the following preamble and Joint Resolution, and the House suspended the customary five minute rule to allow him to speak on the merits of his proposed resolution.

Whereas all nations have seen with alarm the establishment of any formidable power in their vicinity, and whereas the invasion by France of Mexico has resulted, as is alleged, in the establishment of the government founded on the consent of the governed; nevertheless, we have reasons to believe that ulterior designs are entertained by France against California and the Pacific States, which we do not regard as parties to the war now waged against us, therefore

The Congress of the Confederate States do resolve, that the time may not be distant when we will be prepared to unite with those most interested in the vindication of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine for the exclusion of all seeming violations of those principles.<sup>34</sup>

De Jarnette continued by saying that "if England and France saw that we intended to pursue the policy indicated in the resolution,

32. Ibid., p. 313.

33. Ibid., p. 451.

34. Edward McPherson, Political History of the United States During the Great Rebellion, p. 617.

they would give us all we wanted and more than we hoped for."<sup>35</sup>

Another classic example of the prevailing sentiments of the South was an editorial in the Richmond Enquirer which declared that "the Confederacy, if it should cease hostilities, would join the North in applying the Monroe Doctrine to expel the French from Mexico."<sup>36</sup>

Like all other Confederate attempts to obtain recognition, this one finally came to naught. Napoleon still refused to accord recognition to the South. The two great columns, Mexico and cotton, collapsed from under the foundations of Confederate diplomacy. The South was now convinced of its impending doom!

Following the surrender at Appomatox, several Confederate officers of high position and influence went to Mexico to identify themselves with the government of Maximilian in the hope of securing an alliance and, failing in that, of obtaining homes and employment south of the Rio Grande. At the risk of undue repetition, it is perhaps worthwhile here to quote a letter by General Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, to Robert Rose, a businessman in Mexico. Smith instructed Rose to give assurances to the Imperial authorities in Mexico that "there is every probability that our Confederate government will be willing to enter into a liberal agreement with the authorities of the Mexican Empire, based upon the principle of mutual protection from the common enemy." "There are under my command," he said, "sixty thousand men, some

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35. Ibid., p. 618.

36. J. M. Callahan, Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy, p. 254.

anxious to render military service in return for homes, others to whom a vassalage to the Federal Government would be intolerable."

"These men would rally around any flag that promises to lead them to battle against their former foe and would be of inestimable value to the Imperial cause."<sup>37</sup> Smith's plans miscarried and he was forced to surrender the Trans-Mississippi Department to Federal troops.

These Confederate overtures to the Imperialists met with considerable encouragement and in the course of the next few months some three or four thousand Confederate soldiers made their way into Mexico.<sup>38</sup> These were very good reasons for Lincoln's ordering General Philip Sheridan to the Rio Grande in the spring of 1865!

In the face of numerous complexities, Napoleon decided to withdraw his troops from Mexico and thus leave the puppet Emperor to shift for himself. The reasons for the French withdrawal from Mexico were many. The opposition in France to these imperialistic schemes; the menacing attitude of Prussia to force a war with Austria over the Schleswig-Holstein question; the persistence of Juarez's troops, supported by American arms and munitions; and Seward's diplomacy which culminated in an agreement, by which Napoleon promised to withdraw his troops by November,<sup>39</sup> 1867.

To the surprise of everyone, however, Maximilian seemed to

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37. Smith to Rose, May 2, 1865, O.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. 48, Part 2, p. 1292.

38. Ibid., Part I, pp. 297-301.

39. Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., I Session, p. 1408; C. A. Duniway, "Reasons for the Withdrawal of the French from Mexico," in Amer. Historical Association, Annual Report (1902) Vol. I, pp. 315-328.

think that honor demanded that he should remain in Mexico and share the fate of his supporters. This ephemeral empire, built on blood, sand, and folly, collapsed in 1867 and Maximilian fell into the hands of the Juárez government. A verdict of guilty was promptly rendered and Maximilian was sentenced to die before a firing squad on June 19, 1867. The representatives of the various powers tried to obtain a pardon or a modification of the sentence. All failed to move the Juárez government from its purpose and so ended this grim and sanguinary tale of imperialism.

CHAPTER V  
CONCLUSIONS

The real significance of the Confederate-Mexican relations lies in the possibilities which they offered for prolonging the life of the Confederacy, by furnishing a contiguous source of supplies as well as an avenue through which commercial relations with friendly European countries could be maintained. Many southern men had gained valuable experience in Mexican affairs before the Civil War started, and when the war came these southern diplomats were in readiness to assume their tasks. Pickett's mission to Mexico in 1861 failed miserably because he did not win the friendship of Juárez, and because his letters to Toombs revealing his true sentiments about Juárez, fell into Juárez's possession. Another reason Pickett's mission failed was that Corwin succeeded in convincing Juárez that the South was Mexico's real enemy and not the North. The proposed loan that Corwin dangled before Juárez went only to further his point that the United States was the real friend of Mexico. Quintero's efforts in northern Mexico were by far the most successful. He succeeded in winning the friendship and cooperation of these northern provinces. In fact so successful was his mission that Governor Vidaurri had agreed to join the Confederacy and if necessary annex the states under his control to the Confederacy. During his three years in this region, Quintero had worked in close connection with the generals of the western subdivision of Texas. He helped in the purchase of supplies from Mexico or Europe. When Vidaurri was

driven out and Juárez occupied Monterey, Quintero established cordial relations with Juárez. He proved to be just as shrewd in his relations with the Imperialist forces after Juárez was forced out.

After the French intervention occurred, the Confederate leaders hoped that Napoleon would be forced from his neutral position into an alliance with the South. But Napoleon's fear of a war with the United States if he accorded recognition to the South, paralyzed his efforts in behalf of the Confederacy. The Confederate leaders hoped that Mexico, because of its vast mineral resources, would be enough inducement for the French Emperor to accord recognition to the South. Had the French Emperor accorded recognition to the Confederacy before the military disasters of 1864, occurred, the chances are these fiascos might have been averted and the peace movement then going on, could have been encouraged. It is impossible to pass judgment on what might have been the result!

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