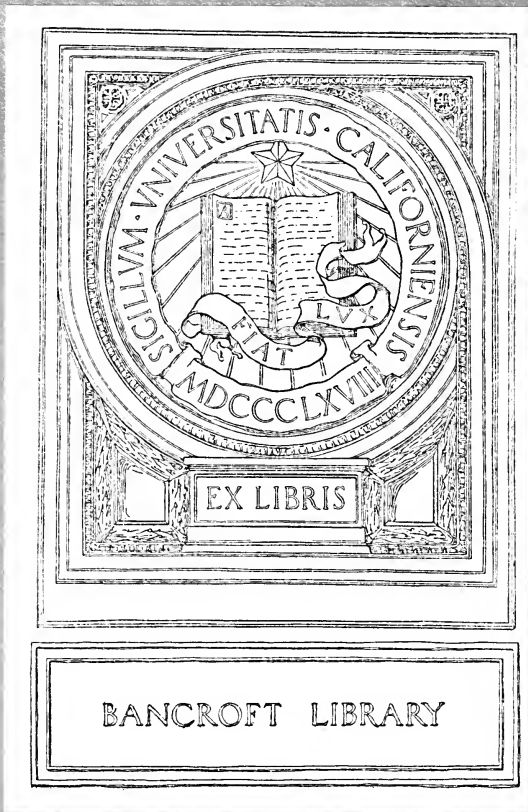


E
179
.5
.W5X



The Bancroft Library

No. 11217

17456B





492
19

11219

S

Wiley

1808-1891

SPEECH

OF

HON. JAMES S. WILEY, OF MAINE,

ON

THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 16, 1848.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.
1848.

E179

.5

W5

X

ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the Navy Pension Bill—

Mr. WILEY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I embrace this opportunity to express my views in relation to the policy of our Government towards that of Mexico, especially in regard to the indemnity which we demand for the injuries incurred by us prior to and during the present war with that nation.

On the 13th day of May, 1846, this House, by a vote of 174 to 14, and the Senate by a still more decisive voice, declared, that "by the act of the Republic of Mexico, war existed between that Government and the United States;" and "for the purpose of enabling this Government to prosecute said war to a speedy and successful termination," the President was authorized to employ the naval and military force of the United States, and the sum of ten millions of dollars was appropriated for the same purpose.

I shall not at the present time go into a particular consideration of the causes and history of the war, nor attempt a description of the many and brilliant exploits of our gallant army. This task, most grateful to every patriotic heart, has been most ably performed by many members of this and the preceding Congress.

I believe, sir, that the people are pretty well informed on this subject; and whenever the justice or expediency of the war has been brought in question, they have promptly and emphatically decided in its favor. The American people, generally, are patriotic, and when the question is between our own and a foreign country, they will say *our country, right or wrong.*"

But, sir, both Congress and the country have passed upon this question. They have decided that there was just cause for the war, and that it should be prosecuted till an honorable peace shall be obtained. I shall not attempt to array all the testimony to prove this position. The act of May, 1846, is decisive on the point; to which I might add the further fact, that many members hold seats on this floor who would hardly have obtained them had they been openly opposed to the war, and pledged to vote against the measures necessary to its prosecution. This is also the case in the other branch of Congress.

Nor shall I go into a lengthy and labored investigation of the manner in which the war has been conducted. The history of the Mexican war is before the world. It is enough to say, that in the

short time of less than two years, our armies, under the most unfavorable circumstances—in a foreign country, possessing, in some regions through which they marched, the most pestilential climate—with the most fearful odds against them, achieved a series of the most brilliant victories ever recorded on the pages of history.

But this war—undertaken for the purpose of defending our territory and protecting our citizens from the assaults of the invader, and prosecuted with a view to obtain indemnity for a long series of injuries and outrages committed upon the property and lives of our citizens, and security against like injuries and outrages in future—is now probably brought to a close. At least, hostilities have for the present ceased; and the two Governments have lately been considering the grounds on which a final settlement should take place, and the kind and amount of indemnity which we have a right to demand.

By the treaty lately adopted by the Senate, and sent to Mexico for ratification there, it is stipulated, on the part of that Government, to cede to the United States New Mexico and Upper California; for which we are to pay a certain sum of money, and assume the debts due from Mexico to the citizens of the United States. This state of things presents for our consideration the question whether, by this arrangement, we are to receive sufficient indemnity for the debts originally due us, and for the losses sustained in prosecuting the war to the present time; and whether it is good policy to extend further the area of our Union. Of this issue, I take the affirmative.

We have seen, sir, that the policy of the Government, in this respect, has been most bitterly assailed, both upon this floor and in the Senate. A distinguished Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. WEBSTER] opposes the policy of acquisition, both on the ground of the alleged unconstitutionality of the measure, and of the worthlessness (as he says) of the territory involved. He remarks:

"I am against the creation of new States. I am against the acquisition of territory to form new States."

Again:

"I say, sir, if I am asked to-day whether, for the sake of peace, I will take a treaty which brings two new States into this Union, on its southern boundary, I say no—distinctly, no. I have said on the southern boundary, because there the present proposition takes its locality. I would say the same of the western, the eastern, or any other boundary. I would resist to day, and to the end, here and everywhere, any proposition to add any foreign territory, on the south or west, north or east, to the States of this Union as they are now constituted and held together under the Constitution. Sir, I hold this question to be vital, permanent, elementary, in the future prosperity of this country and the maintenance of the Constitution."

Here we see that the Senator opposes acquisition

on constitutional grounds. And he considers this "if not the *undivided*, the *preponderating* sentiment of the whole North." Besides, sir, the Senator is willing to make this an issue before the people, "from the Gulf to the British provinces, and from the ocean to the Missouri." Now, sir, let me say, that we are willing to go before the people with this issue. Indeed, they have decided already. So far as I have been able to learn the wishes and feelings of the people, they have spoken loudly in favor of the acquisition of Mexican territory—more especially since it has become evident that we can obtain indemnity in no other way. Sir, if the question were put to the legal voters to-day, whether they would prefer territory or no indemnity, they would decide, by an overwhelming majority, in favor of acquisition. I go further, sir, and say, that Congress has twice decided this question in the affirmative—first in May, 1846, when they placed at the control of the Executive ten millions of dollars and fifty thousand men, for the purpose of prosecuting the war. It was well understood that Mexico had neither money nor credit, and that we must take *land* or nothing; and I cannot believe that any sane man supposed that we should enter upon such an undertaking with no view of obtaining anything for the wrongs and injuries before sustained, the debts then due, or for the expenses to be incurred.

Again, at the last session of Congress, a bill was passed appropriating three millions of dollars, with the express object of acquiring territory from Mexico. Thus, sir, the question of territorial indemnity may be considered as settled—not only by the people, but by Congress. And had the President negotiated a treaty by which we were to receive the promises of bankrupt Mexico in payment of the debts previously due, and the expenses incurred in prosecuting the war, he would have been overwhelmed by the reprobation of an outraged and indignant people. No doubt the Senator is correct in his opinion, so far as the Federal States of the North are concerned. But, sir, I am confident that such is *not* the sentiment of New Hampshire. No, sir; the recent election there has told the story for the Granite State. And I know, sir, that such is not the sentiment of Maine.

But, sir, opposition to the measure of acquisition is just what we should expect from Whig States, and Whig Representatives and Senators here. They have always been opposed to the enlargement of our borders. Their policy has rather been to curtail and contract the area of freedom. Yes, sir, the Senator from Massachusetts is in principle opposed to the acquisition of any more territory, except a harbor or two on the coast of California for the accommodation of the commerce of Massachusetts. There are some whalers from that State who pursue their occupation in the Pacific; and they must be provided for, of course. But no more new States must be added to the Union, because Massachusetts might not, in that case, exert her due weight of influence in the councils of the nation. On the other hand, when you come to the question of *ceding away*—selling out territory, inhabitants and all, for a mere nominal equivalent,—why, then the Senator is not quite so scrupulous as to the right to do so—as the State which I have the honor in part to represent once had the misfortune to learn, to her everlasting regret.

Why, sir, more than one-half of our present area is the result of acquiring large tracts of territory from foreign or neighboring Powers. In 1803, the Government of the United States, under Mr. Jefferson, acquired, by treaty with France, that vast country called the Louisiana purchase. This measure met with the most strenuous opposition from the opponents of that Democratic Administration. A great portion of this extensive and fertile region was considered by the opposers of acquisition as almost entirely worthless—fit only for the abode of wild beasts, and savages as wild. They were also horror-struck at the idea of admitting the French and Spanish inhabitants then living on the territory to equal privileges with themselves. The acquisition was also opposed on constitutional grounds. And it is said that Mr. Jefferson himself doubted the constitutionality of the purchase, and proposed an amendment to meet the case. But he considered the necessity of immediate action so great, that he did not deem it expedient to await the tardy process of an amendment to the Constitution. It is evident, however, that, although he had some scruples against "setting an example of *broad construction*," he never had any objection to the measure from a fear that it would disturb the balance of the Union by throwing the preponderance of power into the West. That great, sagacious, and far-seeing statesman was guided by no such narrow views. He looked upon that measure with an eye single to the present and future welfare of his country. And the result has shown that this was the wisest, the noblest, of the many wise and noble deeds of that illustrious patriot and sage.

But, the measure having been consummated, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition arrayed against it, its great utility and important bearing on the prosperity, not only of the western States, but upon the whole Union, soon quieted the fears, and silenced the murmurs, of those who had been so unwise and short-sighted as to oppose it.

It was feared that the result of this acquisition, so vast in extent, comprising, as it did, an area nearly equal to the territory of all the original States, would be to change the whole balance of power in the Union. But we have yet experienced no such consequences. Three large and flourishing States have already been formed out of the Louisiana purchase, and others will probably soon apply for admission into our glorious Confederacy. And, sir, when they are prepared to do so, I say, let them come. Party management, and a jealousy of the prosperity and power of the West, may for a time retard their admission; but they will have a right to a participation in the privileges and blessings of the union, and they must be admitted. I do not fear the result. I do not believe that their patriotism would permit them, even in accordance with their interest, to abuse the power which they seem likely to obtain. I prefer, rather, in the language of the immortal Washington, to believe that the "name of American, which belongs to them 'in their national capacity, must always exalt their 'just pride of patriotism, more than any appellations derived from local discriminations. They 'will not forget, that with slight shades of difference, they have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles; that they have, in a 'common cause, fought and triumphed together;

‘that the independence and liberty we possess, are the work of joint councils and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.’”

There are but few, probably, of any party at the present day, who will deny the great value and importance of the Louisiana purchase. But was its acquisition a constitutional act? I maintain that it was; and in this position I am sustained by the highest authority. Mr. Justice Story, in his Commentary on the Constitution, while speaking on this point, says:

“As an incidental power, the constitutional power of the United States to acquire territory would seem so naturally to flow from the sovereignty confided to it, as not to admit of very serious question.”

“The Constitution confers on the Government of the United States the power of making war, and of making treaties; and it seems consequently to possess the power of acquiring territory, either by conquest or treaty. If the cession be by treaty, the terms of that treaty must be obligatory; for it is the law of the land. And if it stipulates for the enjoyment by the inhabitants, of the rights, privileges, and immunities of the citizens of the United States, and for their admission into the Union as a State, these stipulations must be equally obligatory. They are within the scope of the constitutional authority of the Government, which has the right to acquire territory, to make treaties, and to admit new States into the Union.”

This language, sir, covers the whole ground, both in regard to territory, with or without inhabitants, and in regard to States to be received into, or annexed to, the Union.

The same doctrine is also held by other elementary writers on constitutional law. And the same point may also be considered as decided by the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case, *American Insurance Company vs. Canter*, 1 Peters, Sup. C. R. 511, 542.

Our Government acted upon this ground, when, in 1819, it acquired Florida by treaty with Spain, and that, too, without any considerable opposition. This measure seems to have been generally acquiesced in by all parties, which may be considered as stamping with the seal of approbation the preceding measure of the like kind.

The acquisition of Florida took place under the administration of Mr. Monroe, during the period of general amalgamation—the “era of good feeling;” and this acquiescence for the time, can hardly be considered as an exception to the general assertion, that there has always been a party in our country opposed to the enlargement of our boundaries, and to the spread of our free institutions; for we very well know, that the same determined and violent opposition which had been made to the acquisition of Louisiana, was renewed and arrayed against the annexation of Texas. The history of Texas, her early sufferings, her struggles to be free, her glorious achievements, her ultimate success in establishing her independence, and her final reception in the sisterhood of States—all these are matters of history, fresh in the recollection of all. Here, too, the doctrine of acquisition was again triumphant. And it would seem as though we ought to consider the question as *res adjudicata*, and finally put to rest. Yes, sir; the acquisition of Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, are “foregone conclusions.” These measures have been “sanctioned and sanctified” by the approbation of the American people. In the language of the Senator from Massachusetts, “I consider these transactions as passed, settled, and legalized. There they stand. They are a part of our political history.

‘They are facts, against which it would be idle at this day to contend.’”

And now, sir, the question is, what shall be the future policy of our Government in regard to the further enlargement of our borders? By the treaty before referred to, it is proposed to acquire New Mexico and Upper California. This proposition is in accordance with the recommendation of the Executive branch of the Government, and has lately received the constitutional sanction of the Senate. We are aware that there was considerable opposition to the treaty; some Senators, as we are informed, objecting on account of the manner in which it was negotiated, others because it did not offer sufficient indemnity, and others still because they did not want any territory at all. This last position is the one assumed by the Senator from Massachusetts, and to him I will let the Senator from New Jersey [Mr. DAYTON] answer. He says:

“The Senator from Massachusetts, in the further prosecution of his argument, tells us that this treaty gives us the line of the Rio Grande, New Mexico, and Upper California; and, in view of this acquisition of territory, the Senator goes into a statement showing the necessarily sparse character of the population, now and for a long time to come; and he then goes on to speak of the number of States which will be formed out of the territory and the Senators who will then take their seats here. In other words, he tells us that fourteen new Senators will take their places here, and, in contemplation of that result, he becomes absolutely struck with horror. He denounces the whole thing as a ‘monstrosity’—a ‘disfiguration’—an ‘ enormity’ upon the fair framework of our Government.”

Again, he remarks:

“The admission of Texas is a foregone conclusion. The number of States that may be carved out of Texas was settled in the annexation of that country. Arrange the boundaries of Texas as you may, it adds not to, nor diminishes from, the number of Senators which she may at a future day place upon this floor. Let me remark, however, that the ten Senators from Texas, of whom the Senator speaks, will not come here in your day, nor in mine, nor in your children’s, nor your children’s children’s day. Be that as it may, however, the Senator relies upon these ten Senators from Texas in order to make out his position. Sir, he might with the same propriety have argued from the admission of Louisiana and Florida, or any other territory acquired since the organization of our Government. You thus get rid, at once, of ten out of the fourteen Senators that have alarmed the judgment of the distinguished Senator. These ‘men in buckram’ pass away. From fourteen they dwindle at once down to four! Let us prosecute this matter a little further. We shall find, that in reference even to the remaining four, they become ‘small by degrees and beautifully less.’”

The Senator from New Jersey disposes of these four Senators in this manner: He says that Texas has claimed, and will probable continue to claim, all the territory formerly belonging to New Mexico which lies east of the Rio Grande. Indeed, this Government is pledged to guaranty that portion to Texas. Now, then, probably one-half of what is called New Mexico belongs to Texas, and no new State can be created out of that portion without her consent.

* In regard to California, the Senator from New Jersey asks—

“When are these two Senators to come from California? He [the Senator from Massachusetts] speaks of California as a State, and of New Mexico as a State; but they do not come here as States at all; they come here as territories—loose, unorganized territories. The Senator speaks of California as a State! What! a State to be admitted into the Union, embracing ten degrees of latitude on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, and extending from five hundred to a thousand miles into the interior! Before that country can be represented here, there must be a population of sufficient

extent to authorize the creation of a State, and that, too, within territorial limits bearing some proportion to the extent of the largest States in this Confederacy."

Thus, sir, this "monstrosity," this "disfiguration," this "enormity," which so frightens the vision of the Senator from Massachusetts, is made to appear a very small and insignificant matter indeed.

Having thus disposed of the constitutional objection involved, and the question of the unfavorable bearing of the proposed acquisition upon the Union, I proceed to consider some reasons directly in favor of the measure.

We have been told, sir, that this acquisition would not be worth a dollar to the United States. The gentleman from Connecticut, [Mr. SMITH,] in his speech delivered in this House a few weeks since, gave us a very dark and revolting picture of the territories in question. He would make us believe that this whole proposed acquisition, far from being of any value, would be a mere curse to our Union; and, consequently, should the treaty be ratified, we should obtain no indemnity whatever, and that every dollar we pay will be worse than thrown away.

Now, sir, let us see how this matter really stands. And, first, we will survey New Mexico.

It is not strange at all, that we should have unfavorable accounts of these countries, even from our own countrymen, prejudiced, as they would naturally be, against a country with which they were at war. In the language of an officer in the American army, written from Santa Fé, New Mexico, January 21, 1848—"Much that has been written from New Mexico, respecting it, doubtless originated more from dislike of, and a desire to abuse the country, than from a wish to impart correct information concerning it." But, sir, men the most prejudiced will sometimes tell the truth, although they may not design to do so. It is so with one of the witnesses whom the gentleman from Connecticut calls to the stand. Col. Hardin is made to speak thus:

"No land is or can be cultivated in Mexico, except by irrigation. The Mexicans evince great ingenuity in the management of water for irrigating purposes; but they are poor farmers. Their plough consists of a straight beam with a collar of wood, which is sometimes covered with iron, about three inches broad. It is the same pattern as the old Roman plough. Oxen are fastened to the beam by strips of raw-hide tied round their horns."

When we read this description of their plough, we are very ready to believe that the Mexicans are "poor farmers," and are hardly prepared to believe what follows:

"They raise fine corn at Monclovia and from thence to the Rio Grande, and pretty good at Parras and Patos. Wheat is raised in the vicinity of Monclovia and Parras. A large quantity of grapes is raised in Parras, from which is manufactured excellent wine and brandy. Sugar, cotton, and other southern productions, grow at Monclovia—most of them luxuriantly. Fine vegetables are raised; and that they can be cultivated all seasons of the year."

Another extract runs thus:

"The mode of cultivation is as rude as possible among the great mass of the people. The hoe is unknown; and their ploughs are no better than those the Egyptians used in patriarchal times. There has been no progress in husbandry for two hundred years; and the whole aspect of the country denotes decay and retrogression."

These extracts, although they come from the other side, and were intended to make a different impression from what they really do make on my mind, contain much truth. We do not wonder at

this appearance of "decay," but we do wonder that the soil was not long ago entirely exhausted, as we are informed that no dressing is used on the land, nor has been for ages. Sir, we could hardly have stronger evidence of the greatest natural fertility.

I will here introduce another extract from the letter written in January last from Santa Fé:

"It is now mid-winter, and yet we are enjoying as fine weather as is known in the States in the pleasant month of September. For salubrity and geniality, the climate of no country on the habitable globe can surpass that of New Mexico."

Again:

"I know that writers have generally represented New Mexico as a comparatively valueless district, with but few narrow valleys well adapted to agriculture. They are, however, such persons as Sterne has said, 'can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry that all is barren.' The valley of the Rio del Norte has a number of more important settlements located in it than this, the capital; and extends from north to south one hundred and fifty miles. Parts of it cannot be matched in beauty; while for productiveness of soil, the best agricultural districts of the United States do not equal it, with all the advantages which that possesses over this in the implements of agriculture and superior cultivation."

He then speaks of the rude implements of husbandry, and the miserable mode of cultivation, and adds:

"Yet the soil, thus imperfectly cultivated, yields in wheat fifty bushels to the acre, on an average, throughout the territory; while in the United States, the average, in the best wheat-growing districts, is but little, if any, more than twenty bushels to the acre. The standard weight of wheat south of this, in the Rio Vega country, as it is called, is equal to sixty pounds to the bushel, and sixty-two pounds north, in El Valley de Taos."

This gentleman estimates the white population of New Mexico at 120,000, and remarks:

"This and the valley of San Miguel, according to the last census taken, contain 30,000; and all the intelligent residents concur in estimating the population of El Valley de Taos and the Rio Vega, with their dense settlements, at 90,000, (which would amount to 150,000.) With a climate eminently favorable to animal and vegetable development, this country, if reclaimed from the possession of the Mexican occupants, and dedicated to the profitable purposes for which it was evidently designed by Providence, will prove to be capable of a dense population."

This account is corroborated by the description given of the same region by the Hon. Willard P. Hall, a Representative from Missouri, (who travelled through New Mexico and Upper California about two years ago, and to whom I am much indebted for very valuable information in regard to these countries,) except that my friend from Missouri estimates the population at a little more than 100,000, the census having been taken, as he thinks, in 1843. These settlements are confined to a very small part of the habitable portion of the country; and, as we have seen, the portions of country now occupied have been cultivated in the most miserable manner for two hundred years. The gentleman before referred to informs me that there is much good land which has never been cultivated at all. And we may safely conclude, that when the Indians shall retire, as they will readily do, before a hardy, industrious, and enterprising population, which will doubtless soon flow in from the States; when the rude mode of cultivation now practised shall give way to the superior and still improving modes now in use here; when the rude and miserable crooked beam of the ancient Roman shall yield to the excellent and efficient Yankee plough, New Mexico will as easily sus-

tain 1,500,000 or 2,000,000 of people as its present number.

New Mexico is also rich in mineral productions. I shall quote from a work which the gentleman from Connecticut cites, and which, of course, will be acknowledged as good authority, by him at least: it is Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, published in 1844. Mr. Gregg spent a great portion of the time for nine years in New Mexico, and is therefore entitled to speak with authority in regard to matters pertaining to the country.

Speaking of the gold mine called "El Placer," he remarks:

"The quantity of gold extracted between the years 1832 and 1835 could not have amounted to less than from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per annum."

And although there has been considerable falling off since that time, he remarks:

"The reduction in profit during the last few years has been caused more by a want of energy and enterprise than by exhaustion of the precious metal, as only a very small portion of the gold region has yet been dug. * * * The dust and grains obtained at this mine are virgin gold; and, as before remarked, are of a very fine quality, producing at the United States Mint an average of at least \$19 70 to the ounce troy, after melting, or about \$19 30 gross. * * Could any dependence be placed in the integrity of the Government, I have no doubt that, with sufficient capital and the aid of machinery, (such as are used in the mines of Georgia and Carolina,) the old mines of the province might be reopened, and a great number of 'placers' very extensively and profitably worked."

He also speaks of others which were in 1844 extensively worked:

"In truth," says he, "as some of the natives have justly remarked, New Mexico is almost one continued 'placer,' traces of gold being discovered over nearly the whole surface of the country."

The process of extracting the gold from the ore is very rude and simple. And the writer of the letter, from which I have before quoted, says:

"With proper machinery, a single person would be able to wash more in an hour than twenty Mexicans in a day, with their hands and little *bateas*, or bowls."

He further says:

"From several years' experience in mining, I am somewhat qualified to judge of its practical operations; and I am correct in saying, that nothing like mining has ever been done in New Mexico."

Besides gold, there are mines of zinc, copper, and lead—and iron in great abundance. There are also vast quantities of salt—one of the *salinas* being five miles in circumference, and yielding an inexhaustible supply.

Nor is there any reason why manufactures should not flourish here. The country is well adapted to the growth of the raw material—cotton and wool; and the streams are of such a character as to afford excellent water-power. It is said, I know, that these streams fail before they reach the main rivers towards which they flow; but in the hilly portions of the country, nearer their sources, they are kept full by the melting of the large quantities of snow which remain upon the mountains till late in the summer. Besides, we should recollect that there is an abundance of rain from April to October; so that the streams must be supplied with water a large part of the year.

Let us now, sir, take a glance at *California*. And here, again, I shall avail myself of the information derived from my friend from Missouri, [Mr. HALL.] He informs me that the climate is the most salubrious and healthful in the world; and, although he does not think the soil is quite

so good as that in the valley of the Mississippi, yet that it is superior to that in other portions of the United States. He remarks that the valley of the Sacramento, which is about three hundred and fifty miles in length, and thirty or forty in width, is probably one of the most fertile in the world. There are other valleys equally fertile, though not so extensive. And he fully confirms the statement of others, to the effect that it is finely adapted to the raising of grain, and for grazing. Horned cattle, sheep, and horses are raised in great numbers, and of excellent quality. Wild horses, elk deer, and other game, abound in the uninhabited portions of the country. Those parts of the district which are habitable are capable of sustaining as numerous a population as Italy. My friend from Missouri corrects a statement made in a letter written by him from California, soon after his arrival in the country, and before he had seen much of it, in regard to the necessity of irrigation for all the crops raised. He remarks that wheat, oats, and the grains generally, can be raised *without* irrigation, but that later crops require this process. Vegetables, of which a large quantity can be raised on a small piece of ground, are produced without much expense, even at the cost of irrigation.

The same remarks that were made in relation to the mineral resources of New Mexico, will generally apply here, with the additional remark that there is, near the Bay of San Francisco, one of the most valuable mines of quicksilver in the world. Coal also abounds.

I will here introduce one extract from Waddy Thompson's *Mexico*:

"From all the information which I have received—and I have been inquisitive on the subject—I am well satisfied that there is not on this continent any country of the same extent as little desirable as Oregon; nor any in the world which combines as many advantages as California. * * * To say nothing of any other harbors in California, that of San Francisco is sufficiently capacious for the navies of the world, and its shores are covered with enough timber (a species of the live-oak) to build those navies. If man were to ask of God a climate, he would ask just such a one as that of California. There is no portion of the western continent which produces all the grains so well. I have been told by more than one person, on whom I entirely relied, that they had known whole fields to produce a quantity so incredible that I will not state it. The whole face of the country is covered with the finest oak, growing wild; sugar, rice, and cotton, find their own congenial climate. Besides all these, the richest mines of gold and silver have been discovered there; and the pearl fisheries have always been sources of the largest profit; and, more than these, there are the markets of India and China, with nothing intervening but the calm and stormless Pacific Ocean. The distance from the head of navigation in the Arkansas and Red rivers to a navigable point of the waters of the Gulf of California is not more than five or six hundred miles: let that distance be overcome by a railroad, and what a vista opens to the prosperity and power of our country!"

Such being the character of Upper California, why should not "the hardy, industrious, and enterprising farmers" from the United States "desert" the comparatively sterile hills and plains of the north, and take up their abode in this paradise of the west? It will be found, sir, by any one who will take the trouble to read Col. J. C. Frémont's Report, that even farmers from the "broad acres" of the fertile valley of the Mississippi do go to California—that their labors are rewarded by bountiful harvests, and that they are within reach of the means of carrying their productions to market.

I cannot further giving a short extract:

"Cap'n Suter emigrated to this country from the western part of Missouri in 1838 or 1839, and formed the first set-

tlement in this valley (the Sacramento) on a large grant of land which he obtained from the Mexican Government. He had at first some trouble with the Indians; but by the occasional exercise of well-timed authority, he has succeeded in converting them into a peaceable and industrious people."

He then goes on to describe Mr. Sutter's establishment, his employment of the Indians, &c. He then remarks:

"He had this year sown (and altogether by Indian labor) three hundred fanegas of wheat, (the fanega being about two bushels.) The lowest average produce of wheat, as far as we can at present know, is thirty five fanegas for one sown; but, as one instance of its fertility, it may be mentioned that Señor Vall-jo obtained, on a piece of ground where sheep had been pastured, eight hundred fanegas for eight sown." "The Sacramento here is a noble river, about three hundred yards broad, deep and tranquil, with several fathoms of water in the channel, and its banks continuously timbered. There were two vessels belonging to Captain Sutter at anchor near the landing—one a large two-masted lighter, and the other a schooner, which was shortly to proceed on a voyage to Fort Vancouver for a cargo of goods."

I find, by reference to McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary, that the number of white people in this province, in 1831, was 23,000. What the number is at this time I have not been able to learn with accuracy; but it is not, probably, less than 40,000; and the tide of emigration is rapidly flowing in from all parts of the Union, and the fertile valleys of California will soon teem with a million of active and thriving people.

But the acquisition of California is of very great importance, in a commercial point of view.

I have already incidentally spoken of the bay of San Francisco. There are other harbors on the coast which, though not so safe and capacious, are yet of considerable consequence. But San Francisco, the harbor of harbors on the Pacific coast, can hardly be overestimated in its importance, not only to California itself, but to the commerce of the whole Union. Our commerce in the Pacific Ocean is now quite extensive, and still increasing. And should the plan of Mr. Aaron H. Palmer, lately recommended to this Government, of a ship-canal to unite the Atlantic and Pacific, and for a railroad from some point on the Mississippi to San Francisco, or San Diego, in California, be carried into operation, as it doubtless will be before the lapse of many years, its value and importance will be greatly augmented.

Why, sir, it is estimated that at the present time "the American whaling vessels alone in the Pacific exceed in number six hundred, and give employment to upwards of twenty thousand men; and that during the year ending the 31st of December, 1837, the whole number of our merchant vessels "which cleared for ports in the Pacific, and to ports in the East Indies, amounted to one hundred and eighty-one." The amount of capital employed does not, probably, fall short of eight millions of dollars—perhaps it is more.

Now, sir, shall we trust the protection of this commerce to foreign nations, with whom we are liable at any time to be engaged in war; or shall we adopt the means necessary to protect it ourselves?

I believe, sir, that we should not hesitate for a single moment. If we embrace the opportunity now offered to us, we may secure the prize; otherwise, it may be forever too late. Every one at all acquainted with the history of California, must be perfectly aware that Great Britain has been, for a number of years past, upon the point of laying her rapacious hand upon it. And she would doubtless have effected her purpose, had not our Government wisely interposed. And I take this occasion to say, that I consider the doctrine proclaimed by Mr. Monroe in 1823, and lately reiterated by the President in his message on Yucatan, a sound one, and that it should be strictly and constantly enforced by the United States. We ought, indeed, to "consider any attempt on the part of Great Britain," or any other European Power, to take possession of California, "as dangerous to our peace and safety."

Sir, I consider this measure of acquisition as one of great importance in other respects than those I have named. It is not merely a question of to-day. The idea of indemnity involved should not be considered as a mere matter of pecuniary interest alone. It is not only important to the free people of our own happy country, but to the worn and weary exile from foreign lands. The nations of the Old World are not yet all free, and probably will not be for ages yet to come. I would say to all who are still oppressed by the heavy hand of despotism, come and make yourselves homes in the fertile valleys and sunny plains of the West. Here your rights shall be respected, and you shall enjoy, equally with us, all the blessings which freedom, equality, and plenty can afford.

Sir, I deprecate that narrow and selfish policy which would circumscribe our expanding Union, and confine its swelling, bursting tide of freemen within the limits of the original States, and which would forbid the exile of Europe to set foot upon our happy shores. Sir, let the warm-hearted laborious son of Erin, the industrious and frugal German, the generous and patriotic Pole, come among us. I fear no contamination from their presence. If our country is not sufficiently large, let its borders be expanded to receive them all. The policy that would attempt to retard the free course of liberal principles, or check the flood of emigration that is still rolling onward to the distant West, is as futile as it is unwise. The current is deep and mighty, and cannot be stayed.

Sir, when I cast a glance upon the past, and behold what our country was two hundred years ago—a vast wilderness, with a few scattered hamlets on the Atlantic coast—when I look upon it now, with its twenty-five millions of free and happy people, spread over an area vast in extent, yet brought into close proximity by the facilities of intercommunication, which have almost annihilated time and space—when I witness the mighty events which are now transpiring, and which point to the future, I am overwhelmed in contemplation of the glorious destiny which awaits our happy Union.



7# 67315424C



