

CHAPTER VI

HOUSTON'S ARRIVAL IN TEXAS — THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

IT is not probable that Houston's determination to go to Texas was the result of any sudden purpose. The future of that vast domain and the desire to acquire it from the Mexicans had undoubtedly had a place in his mind, as it had in those of other restless and ambitious spirits in the United States and in the schemes of the Federal Government. The story told by a Dr. Robert Mayo, of Washington, in 1830, and by him communicated to President Jackson, that Houston had confided to him a scheme for the organization of an expedition to wrest Texas from the feeble hands of Mexico, and that recruiting offices had been established in the eastern cities, under the direction of one Hunter, a discharged cadet from West Point, must be regarded as an invention. Jackson satisfied himself by inquiry that no such scheme was on foot. Recruiting offices could not have been opened in the eastern cities without the knowledge of the authorities, and the story evidently grew out of that element of mystery and conjecture, which accompanied Houston's sensational disappearance into the wilderness. At the same time some indefinite idea of an ambitious

future in connection with Texas must have crossed his mind in the intervals in which his better spirit stirred to lift him out of the degradation of Indian savagery. According to the Rev. Z. N. Morrell he had expressed a purpose to one Deacon McIntosh, of Nashville, to establish "a two-horse republic" in Texas, and to be its first president, as early as in 1830. There are letters which show that such a scheme was not only in his own mind, but in those of his friends, during his Indian exile.

It was in the nature of things that the settlement of Texas by colonists from the United States should create the belief that the country would come into their possession as an independent community, if not as a part of the Union, and restless and enterprising adventurers had been attracted there by more ambitious schemes than those of the agricultural colonists. Among those already in Texas were men of ability and energy, who were afterward distinguished in its military and political history. There was David G. Burnet of New Jersey, afterward the provisional president of the Republic, who had been a subordinate officer in Con Francisco de Miranda's unfortunate expedition for the capture of Venezuela in 1806, and who was at that time the nominal empresario of a grant of land in northeastern Texas; Dr. Branch T. Archer, of Virginia, the president of the revolutionary consultation of Texas citizens, who had intended to join Burr's expedition for the founding of an empire in the Southwest, and had fled to Texas after killing

his antagonist in a duel; Thomas J. Chambers, the first chief justice of the State of Coahuila and Texas, who had made a study of Spanish laws and customs, and was already a man of influence in Mexican affairs; the brothers James and Rezin P. Bowie, of Louisiana, forceful and vigorous adventurers, who had been engaged in smuggling African slaves from the coast into the United States; Henry Smith, of Kentucky, the first provisional governor and Secretary of the Treasury under Houston; Thomas J. Rusk, of South Carolina, a youthful protégé of John C. Calhoun, afterward Secretary of War, commander of the Texan army, Chief Justice and Senator of the United States, a man of sound judgment, great force of character, and commanding ability; the brothers William H. and John A. Wharton, of Virginia, the first, President of the Convention which declared the provisional independence of Texas, and the second, a brilliant soldier at San Jacinto and Secretary of the Navy. These and many others were of a high order of ability, and ready to take the lead in developing the political as well as the material interests of the colony, and in organizing resistance against the aggressions of the Mexican government. In most instances it is probable they had from the first a purpose to bring about the independence of the country. The expectation that there would be a struggle with Mexico existed at an early day among the colonists, and at a meeting at Nacogdoches in 1832 it was proposed to invite General Sam Houston or General

William Carroll, of Tennessee, to settle among them, and take the lead in any revolutionary movement.

Houston went to Texas with a commission from President Jackson to arrange treaties with the Comanches and other wild tribes for the protection of the American traders and settlers on the border, and also to endeavor to persuade those Indians who had left the United States and settled in Texas to return. There was, in all probability, also a secret understanding that he was to examine into the condition of the country as to the power of the people to throw off the Mexican authority, and as to the feeling of the American colonists in regard to annexation to the United States. He was furnished with a passport from the War Department, recommending him to the friendship and good will of all the Indian tribes whose territories he should visit. He also had some private business as an agent of land claimants.

There are various stories told of the incidents of Houston's departure from the Indian Territory and journey to Texas. One, told by Major Elias Rector, known in the Southwest as "The Fine Arkansas Gentleman," is that Houston, a Major Arnold Harris, and himself traveled together through southeastern Arkansas. Houston was mounted on a little Indian pony very disproportionate to his stature. The constant subject of Houston's conversation was the ignoble appearance he would make on such an animal, and he earnestly appealed to Harris to exchange his fine large horse for it. Said he, —

“This d—d bob-tailed pony is a disgrace. He is continually fighting the flies, and has no means of protecting himself, and his kicks and contortions render his rider ridiculous. I shall be the laughter of all Mexico. I require a steed with his natural weapon, a flowing tail, that he may defend himself against his enemies as his master has done. Harris, you must trade.”

The terms of the exchange were finally made, and Houston recovered his dignity and good humor as the possessor of the broom-tailed mare. When they came to part, Rector took a razor from his saddle-bags and presented it to Houston. Houston said, —

“Major Rector, this is apparently a gift of little value, but it is an inestimable testimony of the friendship which has lasted many years, and proved steadfast under the blasts of calumny and injustice. Good-by. God bless you. When next you see this razor it shall be shaving the President of a Republic, by G—d!”

Houston left the Indian Territory and crossed the Red River on the 10th of December, 1832. He went first to Nacogdoches, and from there to San Felipe, where he failed to meet Austin, who was absent. He journeyed from San Felipe to San Antonio in company with Colonel James Bowie, then a prominent figure in Texas affairs, and was by him introduced to Veramendi, the Vice-Governor of the State, Bowie's father-in-law, and to Ruiz, the Mexican commandant. Houston was cordially received by the

Mexican authorities, and by their consent held a council with the Comanche chiefs, distributed medals among them, and made arrangements to have them send a delegation to Fort Gibson to meet commissioners from the United States. This arrangement was not carried out by the Indians, owing to the jealousy of the Mexican officials, who apprehended the results of American influence on the tribes in their territory. Houston returned by way of San Felipe, where he met Austin. At Nacogdoches he was invited by the citizens to take up his residence among them, and promised to do so. He proceeded to Natchitoches, Louisiana, from whence he sent a report of his council with the Comanches to the War Department, and addressed the following letter to President Jackson, in which can be read the answer in regard to his secret mission to Texas:—

NATCHITOCHEs, LA., *February 13, 1833.*

GENERAL JACKSON:

Dear Sir, — Having been as far as Bexar, in the province of Texas, where I had an interview with the Comanche Indians, I am in possession of some information, which will doubtless be interesting to you, and may be calculated to forward your views, if you should entertain any, touching the acquisition of Texas by the United States government. That such a measure is desired by nineteen twentieths of the population of the province, I cannot doubt. They are now without laws to govern or protect them.

Mexico is involved in civil war. The Federal Constitution has never been in operation. The Government is essentially despotic, and must be so for years to come. The rulers have not honesty, and the people have not intelligence. The people of Texas are determined to form a state government, and separate from Coahuila, and unless Mexico is soon restored to order, and the Constitution revived and reenacted, the province of Texas will remain separate from the Confederacy of Mexico. She has already beaten and repelled all the troops of Mexico from her soil, nor will she permit them to return. Her want of money, taken in connection with the course which Texas *must and will adopt*, will render the transfer of Texas to some power inevitable, and, if the United States does not press for it, England will most assuredly obtain it by some means. Now is a very important crisis for Texas. As relates to her future prosperity and safety, as well as to the relations which it is to bear to the United States, it is now in the most favorable attitude, perhaps, which it can be, to obtain it on fair terms. England is pressing her suit for it, but its citizens will resist, if any transfer is made of them to any power but the United States. I have traveled nearly five hundred miles across Texas, and am now enabled to judge pretty correctly of the soil and resources of the country, and I have no hesitancy in pronouncing it the finest country, for its extent, upon the globe; for the greater portion of it is richer and more healthy than West Tennessee. There can be

no doubt that the country, east of the River Grand of the North, would sustain a population of ten millions of souls. My opinion is that Texas, by her members in Convention, will, by the 1st of April, declare all that country as Texas proper, and form a State Constitution. I expect to be present at the Convention, and will apprise you of the course adopted, as soon as the members have taken a final action. It is probable that I may make Texas my abiding-place. In adopting this course *I will never forget* the country of my birth. I will notify from this point the Commissioners of the Indians at Fort Gibson of my success, which will reach you through the War Department. I have, with much pride and inexpressible satisfaction, seen your proclamation, touching the nullifiers of the South and their "peaceful remedies." God grant that you may save the Union! It does seem to me that it is reserved for you, and you alone, to render to millions so great a blessing. I hear all voices commend your course, even in Texas, where is felt the greatest interest for the preservation of the Republic. Permit me to tender you my sincere thanks, felicitations, and most earnest solicitation for your health and happiness, and your future glory, connected with the prosperity of the Union.

Your friend, and obedient servant,

SAM HOUSTON.

Houston returned to Nacogdoches, and was undoubtedly busy in consultation with the men who

were scheming for the acquisition of Texas from Mexico. One G. W. Featherstonehaugh, an English traveler, came across him in the little village of Washington at this time. Says he, in his book, "A Journey through the Slave States:"—

"I was not desirous of remaining long at this place. General Houston was here, leading a mysterious sort of a life, shut up in a small tavern, seeing nobody by day, and sitting up all night. The world gave him credit for passing his waking hours in the study of *trente et quarante* and *sept à lever*, but I had been in communication with too many persons of late, and had seen too much passing before my eyes to be ignorant that the little place was the rendezvous where a much deeper game than *faro* or *rouge et noir* was being played. There were many persons at the time in the village from the States lying adjacent to the Mississippi, under the pretense of purchasing government lands, but whose real object was to encourage the settlers in Texas to throw off their allegiance to the Mexican government."

The war between Santa Anna and Bustamente was terminated by a compromise in which both generals united to place President Pedraza, who had been elected in 1828 and deposed, in nominal power. Santa Anna retired to his princely estate, Manga del Clavo, near Vera Cruz, as was his custom, to await the disturbances under a weak government which would again enable him to appear as the savior of the state. Bustamente, having disbanded his troops,

was banished at the instigation of Santa Anna. Pedraza's term having expired, Santa Anna was elected President of the Republic without opposition at the election on the 29th of March, 1833, and took his seat on the 16th of May following. In his inaugural address he declared himself in favor of the Liberal Constitution of 1824, and promised that his administration, "like his own character," should be mild and tolerant.

Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was one of the most remarkable figures who have appeared in the history of this continent, and the vicissitudes of his prolonged career included every variety of fortune and adventure. His head was constantly appearing above the troubled waters of Mexican politics, and the civil wars which were synonymous with them, from the expulsion of the Spaniards in 1821 to the downfall of Maximilian's empire in 1866. He was born in Jalapa, February 21, 1795, and entered the army at an early age. He was a lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish service when he joined with Iturbide in the revolution, and was made a brigadier-general and commandant of Vera Cruz. In 1822 he organized the revolt which overthrew Iturbide, and in 1828 deposed Pedraza and put Guerrero in his place. In 1829 he defeated and captured a division of Spanish troops under General Barradas, who had landed at Tampico for the purpose of repossessing the country. In 1832 he outmanœuvred Bustamente, who had usurped the presidency, and banished him. He was

elected President in 1833, abolished the Congress, and virtually made himself dictator. His defeat and imprisonment in Texas destroyed his influence, until it was restored by his attack upon the French in Vera Cruz in 1838, in which he lost a leg. He was again President, or the governing power behind the nominal occupant of the chair, from 1841 to 1844, when there was a revolution against him, and he went into banishment at Havana. From this he was recalled to be President and commander-in-chief of the army in the war between Mexico and the United States. After his series of defeats by Generals Taylor and Scott, he abandoned his office and retired from the country to Jamaica. Another revolution in 1852 recalled him to power, and in 1855 he was again driven into exile. He returned to Mexico when the French troops invaded the country in 1863, and was Grand Marshal of the Empire under Maximilian. He was banished by Marshal Bazaine for issuing proclamations and conspiring against the empire, and after its downfall was captured while attempting to make a landing in the country, and sentenced to death, but was pardoned by President Juarez on condition of leaving the country. In 1872 a general amnesty enabled him to return to Mexico, and he survived in harmless imbecility and contempt until the 20th of June, 1876. Santa Anna was a man of restless energy and ambition, and displayed considerable ability both as an administrator and a military commander. He lost his head in the Texas campaign,

but he was invariably successful in the Mexican civil wars, and in the battles with the American armies showed a good deal of strategic skill. He was utterly unscrupulous and treacherous, and betrayed every party and every ally that put trust in him. He was vindictive and cruel even beyond the barbarous habits of Mexican warfare, and never spared a defeated enemy. In habits and tastes he was a thorough Mexican, his favorite amusements being cock-fighting and card-playing, and his personal vices were gross and notorious. In personal appearance he was about five feet five inches in height, of spare form, dark complexion, and with what the English traveler, Ruxton, described as "an Old Bailey countenance." But his manners were pleasing and insinuating when he chose to make them so, and his force of character was manifested in his speech and gesture. Up to the time of the invasion of Texas he had been successful in all his battles and schemes of ambition, and arrogated to himself the title of the "Napoleon of the West."

The legislature of the State of Coahuila and Texas had passed a law forbidding the further settlement of American colonists, and limiting future grants to Mexicans. This and the general inconvenience and disorganization resulting from the enforced union of the two provinces determined the colonists in Texas to demand the organization of the territory into a State by itself. They elected delegates to a Convention for this purpose, and it met at San Felipe

on April 1, 1833. Houston was one of the delegates from Nacogdoches. William H. Wharton was elected President, and committees were appointed to frame a state Constitution, and draw up a memorial to the Mexican Congress setting forth the reasons why a separation from Coahuila was asked for. Houston was chairman of the committee to frame a Constitution. The one reported was formed on the model of those of the States of the Union. It contained provisions for a trial by jury, the writ of habeas corpus, the right of petition, the freedom of the press, universal suffrage, and other essentials of a republican form of government. On the subject of the freedom of religion the Constitution was silent. Resolutions offered by Burnet, and supported by Houston, condemning and prohibiting the African slave trade, which had been carried on through the ports of Texas since the time of the settlement of the pirate Lafitte at Galveston, were adopted by the Convention. A debate arose on the question of incorporating banking institutions. This was opposed by Houston, on the ground that it was unwise in itself and calculated to prejudice the Mexican government against the acceptance of the Constitution. Houston prevailed, and a clause was inserted in the Constitution prohibiting the creation of any banking institution for the term of ninety-nine years. An able memorial was drawn up by Burnet, setting forth the reasons why Texas was entitled to an independent organization; Stephen F. Austin, William H. Whar-

ton, and James B. Miller were appointed delegates to present the petition to the Mexican Congress; and the Convention adjourned after a session of fifteen days.

Austin was the only one of the delegates who went to Mexico. When he arrived at the capital, he found that Gomez Farias, the Vice-President under Santa Anna, was exercising the executive power, Santa Anna having retired in one of his mysterious seclusions at Manga del Clavo. Great confusion prevailed in the Mexican government. The finances were disorganized, and Congress, under the instigation of Farias, had passed laws disbanding a portion of the army and levying taxes on the property of the church. These caused great dissatisfaction among two powerful elements in the State, and revolutionary movements, probably instigated by Santa Anna, were continually breaking out in the capital and in the provinces. Austin could get no hearing on his petition, and, in despair of obtaining any action, he wrote, on the 2d of October, 1833, to the municipal council of Bexar, recommending that all the districts in Texas should unite, and organize a State in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of 1824, without waiting for the sanction of the Mexican Congress. In the mean time Austin had obtained the abrogation of the law, passed by the Coahuila legislature, prohibiting immigration from the United States, and started to return home. But his letter to the municipality of Bexar had been sent to Vice-

President Farias, who considered it treasonable, and had Austin intercepted and arrested at Saltillo. Austin was taken back to the city of Mexico, and imprisoned in one of the dungeons of the old Inquisition, where he was treated with great rigor, and denied the use of books or writing materials.

On the 13th of May, 1834, Santa Anna reappeared from his seclusion, and resumed his office as President. He dismissed the Congress, and promulgated a "Plan," which is the Mexican phrase for an alteration in the form of government, by which the laws for the taxation of church property and the banishment of monarchists were abolished, and a special Congress called to frame a new Constitution. Santa Anna released Austin from his dungeon, and professed great friendliness to him. But he was still detained at the capital, while the charges against him were transferred from one court to another with the obvious purpose of delaying his return. In the mean time the legislature of Coahuila and Texas had been disposing of enormous tracts of land at a nominal price, under the pretext of providing a fund for the payment of troops to repress the Indian raids; and a quarrel, followed by an émeute, had arisen over the removal of the provincial capital from Saltillo to Monclova. On the 5th of October, 1834, Santa Anna called a council, consisting of the four Secretaries of State, the representatives of Coahuila and Texas, Austin, and Lorenzo de Zavala, Governor of the province of Mexico, to take into consideration the ques-

tion in dispute, and the petition of Texas for a separate organization. Santa Anna decided that Texas could not be separated from Coahuila, as there was no provision in the Constitution authorizing such actions, but held out hopes that it might be organized as a Territory. He, however, ordered a new election for Governor and Legislature, and Austin wrote advising the people of Texas to accept the decision. Austin was satisfied, or professed to be, with Santa Anna's promises of liberal treatment to the Texan colonists; but, as he was still detained as a prisoner, it is possible that he expected that his correspondence would be opened and examined. The people of Texas were at once alarmed and angered at the arrest and imprisonment of Austin. A meeting was held at San Felipe to protest against it, but the petition for his release had no effect.

There were some abortive attempts at insurrectionary movements in Bexar and San Felipe during the fall of 1834, while Austin was imprisoned. But they were discouraged, as premature and jeopardizing Austin's safety, by the Central Committee appointed by the April Convention, and came to nothing. In the mean time the subservient Mexican Congress was carrying out the dictatorial purposes of Santa Anna. The province of Zacatecas, which had not acquiesced in the revolution, was declared to be in a state of rebellion, and Vice-President Farias, who was a sincere republican, was banished. The most important action, and one which made a revolution in Texas

inevitable was the passage of a decree reducing the number of the militia to one for every five hundred inhabitants, and ordering the rest to give up their arms. The arms of the Texans at that period were a part of their daily means of existence, as well as the protection of their lives and property, and to take them from the people would be to deprive them of an essential aid to their support, as well as to leave them and their families at the mercy of the marauding Indians. There could be but one answer in such a community to a demand for the surrender of its arms, and the refusal would be justified by the fundamental law of self-preservation.

The legislative and executive government of the State of Coahuila and Texas was in a condition of anarchy. Augustin Viesca, a republican, had been elected Governor, but the people of Saltillo, angry at the removal of the capital to Monclova, had declared in favor of Santa Anna and raised the standard of revolt. The legislature had sold another large tract of Texas land at the price of two cents per acre, and, although professing to be liberal toward the American colonists, had done nothing for their government or protection. Santa Anna advanced at the head of an army for the subjugation of the rebellious province of Zacatecas. On the 11th of May, 1834, a bloody and decisive battle was fought on the plain of Guadalupe between the army of Santa Anna and that of Don Francisco Garcia, the Governor of Zacatecas. The latter was routed with great slaughter, and the

city of Zacatecas given up to pillage. After having subjugated Zacatecas, Santa Anna returned to the capital, leaving behind him General Martin Perfecto de Cos, his brother-in-law, to regulate matters in Coahuila. Governor Viesca fled to Bexar, but afterward returned to Coahuila and was captured by the troops of Cos. Viesca, and with him Colonel Benjamin F. Milam, a Texan empresario, who had taken part in the brilliant and daring expedition of Xavier Mina against the Spanish government of Mexico in 1817, were sent as prisoners into the interior. The legislature of Coahuila was dispersed by Cos.

These events deprived the colonists in Texas of even the semblance of a government, and they organized themselves into committees of safety for protection against the Indians, who had become very troublesome, and had attacked and murdered a party of traders near Gonzales. These committees of safety had no design of resistance to the Mexican authorities, but there was an element among the colonists in favor of an immediate movement for independence. In June a meeting was held at San Felipe, at which resolutions were adopted in a war spirit, and an address was issued by R. M. Williamson, known as "Three-Legged Willie," calling upon the people to arouse themselves to resistance, and declaring that "Our country, our liberty, and our lives are all involved in the present contest between the State and the military." Early in the same month, William B. Travis, at the head of a party of fifty colonists, made

a descent upon the post at Anahuac, commanded by Captain Tenorio, and disarmed and drove out the soldiers. This act was disavowed by the municipal council of Liberty, and Captain Tenorio and his soldiers were forwarded to Bexar by the citizens of San Felipe. Various attempts were made by representatives of the peace party to arrange terms of conciliation with General Cos, and two commissioners, Edward Gritton and D. C. Barrett, were appointed to wait on him for that purpose. Cos professed liberal and pacific intentions, but, in the mean time, dispatches from him to the commandant at Anahuac, announcing the departure of troops from Mexico "to regulate matters" in Texas, had been intercepted. Early in July, Lorenzo de Zavala, a prominent Mexican republican, who had been governor of the province and city of Mexico, and ambassador to France, arrived in Texas. He had refused to acquiesce in the despotic movements of Santa Anna, and fled to escape proscription. An order was at once sent to Colonel Ugartechea, in command at Bexar, for the arrest of Zavala, and also Travis, Williamson, Johnson, and other leaders of the war party. Ugartechea's requisition for the arrests was refused or evaded by the civil authorities, and, pending the abortive communications of the peace commissioners with General Cos, no attempt was made to capture them by military force. The order for the arrests caused great excitement among the colonists, and greatly stimulated the war feeling. At a meeting at San Augustine resolu-

tions were introduced by Houston, and adopted, declaring that the arrest of Governor Viesca and the intended introduction of the military were evidences of tyranny and a violation of the terms on which the colonists had been invited to Texas. They also provided for the appointment of a committee of safety, the organization of the militia, and for treaties of alliance with the neighboring Indians. It was also declared that those who should desert the country in the crisis should forfeit their lands. Houston and Rusk visited the Indians, and secured their alliance by promising that the surveyors should make no more marks on their lands. Further trouble had occurred on the coast. After the ejection of Captain Tenorio and his troops from Anahuac, Santa Anna sent Captain T. M. Thompson, an Englishman known as "Mexican" Thompson, in the schooner *Correo* to collect the revenue. Thompson, who was a desperado of buccaneering proclivities, conducted himself in a very high-handed manner. He captured the American brig *Tremont*, with a supply of goods for the Texas trade, and attempted to seize the schooner *San Felipe*, Captain Hurd, but was beaten off. Subsequently the *Correo* was captured by the *San Felipe* and the small steamer *Laura*, and Thompson was taken to New Orleans, where he was tried for piracy.

Early in September, Stephen F. Austin returned to Texas, after more than two years' detention in Mexico. He was released by Santa Anna, with strong protestations of friendship for himself and the people

of Texas. Austin's arrival caused great rejoicing in his colony, and he was given a public dinner at Brazoria, at which he addressed a gathering of more than a thousand citizens on the condition of affairs. His speech was moderate in tone, and repeated Santa Anna's professions of good will toward the people of Texas. But it declared that liberal institutions were being overthrown in Mexico, and a centralized and despotic government established, and recommended the calling of a consultation of the people of Texas to "decide what representations ought to be made to the general government, and what ought to be done in the future." The moderation as well as the strength of Austin's character gave unity and confidence to the people, and hereafter public sentiment was organized into a harmonious and definite form. Every one realized that a contest was inevitable, and the peace party gave way to that in favor of resistance. On September 13, a circular was issued by Austin, representing the committee of San Felipe, recommending the election of delegates to a General Consultation, and the organization and equipment of military companies. It declared that the peace negotiations with General Cos were useless. It concluded with the emphatic words, "War is our only resource. There is no other remedy. We must defend our rights, ourselves, and our country by force of arms." About the middle of September, General Cos had landed at Copano and started to march to Bexar with five hundred troops.

On the 2d of October, ¹⁸³⁴ occurred the first clash of arms in the war of independence. In accordance with the decree for the disarmament of the Texans, Colonel Ugartechea, in command of the troops at Bexar, sent a demand to the people of the little town of Gonzales for a six-pounder cannon which had been supplied them by the authorities of Bexar for defense against the Indians. They refused to give it up, and Ugartechea dispatched Captain Castenada with a troop of a hundred cavalry, to demand it of the alcalde, and, if it was refused, to take it by force. When Castenada arrived at the west bank of the Guadalupe River he found that the ferry boat had been removed to the east side. He made his demand across the river for the cannon, but was answered that the alcalde was absent. As soon as the first requisition had been made for the cannon the people of Gonzales had sent messages to the neighboring colonists asking for help, in expectation that the demand would be renewed by force. An armed party had been gathered at San Felipe for the purpose of attempting to intercept the march of General Cos to Bexar, but on the receipt of this appeal it hurried by forced marches to Gonzales. A reinforcement of volunteers also arrived from Bastrop. On the 30th Castenada made one or two attempts to cross the river, but, finding the fords guarded by the Texans, withdrew. The next day the Texan force, which had been increased, by the arrivals, from eighteen to a hundred and sixty-eight men, organized by the choice

of John H. Moore, a distinguished Indian fighter, as colonel, and crossed the river at seven o'clock in the evening. Their advance was discovered by the Mexican pickets, who gave the alarm by firing. Both parties formed in array of battle and rested on their arms during the night. At four o'clock in the morning, under cover of a dense fog which had sprung up, the Mexicans retreated to a mound on the prairie. When this movement was discovered at daylight by the Texan scouts, they fired upon the Mexicans, who pursued them to the main body, but were driven back by a discharge of the six-pounder. The Texans then advanced with their cannon, and prepared to give battle. Castenada attempted a parley with the evident purpose of gaining time for the arrival of reinforcements. Moore met him, and demanded that he should declare in favor of the Liberal Constitution and join the Texans, or surrender. Castenada refused and the battle was opened. The six-pounder, loaded with grape, was fired, and the Texans charged with a yell upon the Mexicans, who broke at the first onset, and galloped away to Bexar. The Texans did not lose a man. The Mexicans had a small number killed. This was the response to the first attempt to carry out the decree for the disarmament of the colonists, and an evidence of the kind of fighters Santa Anna would have to meet in attempting to subdue Texas to the condition of a Mexican province.