

CHAPTER XV

GOVERNOR OF TEXAS — SECESSION

WHATEVER hopes Houston may have had of being able to pass his declining years in peace and tranquillity, he found the political condition of Texas more excited and disturbed than at any period since the revolution, and that it was necessary for him to gird up his loins for a tremendous struggle against the conspirators, who were endeavoring to array the State against the Union. The secession element in Texas was more desperate and determined than in any of the Southern States, except South Carolina. It was also more discreditable and criminal. In South Carolina the movement was more general, and in a certain sense more patriotic. It was founded on a definite theory of government, logically held and argued, and it represented the spirit of State pride and independence. In Texas, on the other hand, it was more selfish, and took the darker form of conspiracy. Its leaders were the adventurers who were in sympathy with Walker in his attempts to subjugate Central America, and with Lopez in his descent upon the island of Cuba, and were eager for any scheme that promised them power and plunder. Their avowed purpose was the reopening of the Afri-

can slave trade, and their unacknowledged, and perhaps unformulated, plans were for the formation of a buccaneer empire, with unlimited designs for aggression and plunder upon their Spanish-American neighbors. They were represented by a secret society, called "The Knights of the Golden Circle," which had a regular military organization, was well supplied with arms, and had a considerable fund of money. The organization was originally formed to set on foot or support filibuster expeditions like those of Walker and Lopez, but the growing antagonism between the North and South offered them a more tempting field in the shape of a Southern empire, which they hoped to control for their purposes. Their lodges, called "castles," were established in all the principal towns, and it was estimated that at the outbreak of the secession difficulty they had a force of 8000 men, formed in regular military organization and to some extent disciplined. They were active in politics, and by their power and energy controlled the official action of the Democratic party. Governor Runnels was in sympathy with this element, as was also the majority of the legislature during his administration. During the excitement of the struggle to force the admission of slavery into Kansas, Governor Runnels issued a special message to the legislature, calling attention to the threatened aggressions upon Southern rights, and distinctly foreshadowing secession. The legislature adopted a resolution denouncing the attempts of the Northern States to exclude slavery

from Kansas, and to prevent the slave-holders from carrying their property into the common territory of the Union. It authorized the governor to order an election of seven delegates to a convention of the Southern States, and, in case such a convention was not held, to call a special session of the legislature to consider the question of Texas resuming her independence.

These open attacks upon the permanency of the Union aroused and alarmed the majority of the citizens, who were opposed to secession and the filibuster designs of the conspirators. In the Democratic Convention of 1859, which renominated Runnels, a platform was adopted advocating secession in the contingency of the further invasion of Southern rights, and there was an outspoken expression of opinion in favor of reopening the slave trade. The party in favor of reopening the slave trade did not confine themselves to declarations. Two cargoes of barbarian slaves from Africa were landed in chains, one near Galveston and one near Indianola, and distributed through the country. These events caused great excitement and indignation among the conservative and Unionist classes, and they determined upon political action in opposition to the secession Democracy. Houston was the natural leader from his personal popularity among the people and his vigorous denunciations of disunion. There was no definite organization of the party, but at a public meeting at Brenham, Houston was nominated for governor by acclamation. He

accepted in a letter which declared that "the Constitution and the Union embraced all the principles by which he would be governed."

The campaign that followed was one of the most notable and exciting which had ever taken place in Texas. It demonstrated Houston's tremendous hold upon the common people and his extraordinary power as a stump-speaker. All the party machinery, most of the prominent public men, and the influential newspapers were against him. Almost single-handed he defeated them all. He made a thorough canvass of the State, speaking in nearly every town and village. He aroused the enthusiasm of the people by his eloquent appeals for the preservation of the Union, replied to the vindictive personal attacks made upon him by his opponents with a vituperation more scathing than their own, tickled his audiences by his familiar and sometimes coarse humor, and strengthened the attachment of his personal followers by his cordial greetings and intimate conversation. There was no one like Houston for a Texas audience. In joint debates he simply overwhelmed his competitors, and treated them with a contempt partly real and partly affected, as if it was insolence on their part to attempt to speak on the same platform with him. One after another they retired discomfited, and in his closing speech at Galveston he reckoned them up with contemptuous personal epithets. This is a specimen of the manner in which he dealt with them, and manifested his confidence in his hold upon

the people. Senator Wigfall had been replying to him in Eastern Texas. At a meeting in the court-house of one of the towns, at which Wigfall was present, Houston concluded his speech by saying: "I am told that there is a little fellow by the name of Wig-tail, or some such name, following me about and trying to answer my speeches. What he will tell you will be a pack of lies." So saying he stalked out, followed by a portion of the audience, leaving Wigfall to make his speech to the remainder. Houston, as was his custom, seated himself upon a store-box on the sidewalk among his friends, and commenced whittling and talking familiarly about their families, the crops, and the neighborhood gossip. But all the while he kept his eye on the court-house door. When the audience began to come out after the conclusion of Wigfall's speech, he rose up to his full height, and, waving his big white hat, shouted, "Did n't I say to you that he 'd tell you a pack of lies?" His familiar and caustic humor was equally taking, and the anecdotes of his sayings were relished at every cross-roads grocery and by every cabin fire. At the town of Milam a young lawyer, the son of an old friend of Houston, had established his office. Houston visited him, and talked with him in his usual cordial and impressive manner about his family and prospects. Later, while seated among a group of his friends in front of a store, he was informed that the young lawyer was the only man in the town who was going to vote against him. Presently the young man

passed the group. Houston asked in a tone loud enough for him to hear, "Who is that long, gangling scarecrow, who is going by?" This was considered a touch of humor, worthy of "Old Sam," and became the current joke of the neighborhood. Houston's triumph was in chief measure that of his personal influence. His course in opposing the Kansas-Nebraska bill had been generally disapproved, and he had been defeated in the previous campaign in which he had not made an active personal canvass. He rallied and invigorated the Union sentiment, and converted a minority into a majority. The actions of the extreme element had undoubtedly alarmed the conservative portion of the community, but it is extremely improbable that the Union sentiment would have preponderated if Houston had not given it force and energy. As it was, the majority of the legislature was in the hands of the disunionists, and his associates in the Executive, except one, were swept away by the tide, when it arose. A considerable portion of his vote was due simply to the fact that he was "Sam Houston," and had a strong personal party, which would have followed and supported him under any circumstances. He received 36,257 votes, to 27,500 for Runnels.

Houston was inaugurated as Governor December 21, 1859. He sent his message to the legislature January 15. Mexican banditti, under the command of Juan de Cortinas, had been preying upon the people on the border of the Rio Grande, and the Indians

had been especially troublesome and dangerous on the frontier. Houston promptly applied to the government of the United States for additional troops, and organized three companies of rangers to patrol the frontier. He asked the legislature for an appropriation to pay them. He recommended various changes in the departments, and strongly urged liberal appropriations for the public schools. In regard to the relations of Texas with the United States, he congratulated the legislature on the triumph of conservatism in the nation, and the evident purpose to repress the dangerous agitators on both sides. He said, "Texas will maintain the Constitution and stand by the Union. It is all that can save us as a nation. Destroy it and anarchy awaits us."

The excitement over the coming presidential election was rising to fever heat. Houston took no active part in the campaign. He was opposed to the election of Lincoln as the representative of Northern aggression against slavery. He was equally opposed to the election of Breckenridge and of Douglas, as he had vowed never to vote for any man who had supported the Kansas-Nebraska bill. He saw no chance for the election of Bell, and, besides, did not regard him as a competent man for the Presidency. In a private letter from Austin, dated September 8, 1860, he declared that he stood with folded arms in regard to the candidates, and he could see no way out of the difficulty except by the election of members of the Electoral College who would be pledged to

vote for a Union man, regardless of the official candidates. This was obviously a hopeless and impossible scheme. On the 22d of September there was a grand Union mass meeting at Austin. Houston addressed it in an eloquent and forcible speech, rising from a sick-bed to do so. He spoke of the glories of the common country and its great destiny, and pointed out the weakness of any State which abandoned the Union. He declared that the possible triumph of the Republican party would not be a sufficient cause for the dissolution of the Union:—

“But if, through division in the ranks of those opposed to Mr. Lincoln, he should be elected, we have no excuse for dissolving the Union. The Union is worth more than Mr. Lincoln, and, if the battle is to be fought for the Constitution, let us fight it in the Union and for the sake of the Union. With a majority of the people in favor of the Constitution, shall we desert the government, and leave it in the hands of the minority? A new obligation will be imposed upon us, to guard the Constitution and to see that no infraction of it is attempted or permitted. If Mr. Lincoln administers the government in accordance with the Constitution, our rights must be respected. If he does not, the Constitution provides a remedy.”

He denounced the disunion agitators of the South as merely reckless and mischievous conspirators, who owned no property and had no interest in slavery. “I know some of them, who are making the most fuss, who would not make good negroes if they were

blackened." He paid an affecting tribute to the memories of Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson, and appealed to the old Whigs and old Democrats to follow the example of their great leaders in devotion to the Union. He concluded with words of powerful and pathetic eloquence:—

“When I look back and remember the names that are canonized as the tutelar saints of liberty, and the warnings they have given you against disunion, I cannot believe that you will be led astray. I cannot be long among you. My sands of life are fast running out. As the glass becomes exhausted, if I can feel that I can leave my country prosperous and united, I shall die content. To leave men with whom I have mingled in troublous times, and whom I have learned to love as brothers; to leave the children of those whom I have seen pass away, after lives of devotion to the Union; to leave the people who have borne me up and sustained me; to leave my country, and not feel the liberty and happiness I have enjoyed would still be theirs, would be the worst pang of death. I am to leave children among you, to share the fate of your children. Think you I feel no interest in the future for their sakes? We are passing away. They must encounter the evils which are to come. In the far distant future the generations that spring from our loins are to venture in the path of glory and honor. If untrammelled, who can tell the mighty progress they will make? If cut adrift, if the calamitous curse of disunion is inflicted

upon them, who can picture their misfortune and shame?"

Houston believed in the prevalence of the Union sentiment among the people of the South, and endeavored to give it an opportunity for expressing itself. He addressed letters to the Governors of the Southern States, proposing a convention, and issued a proclamation for an election to be held early in February for the choice of the seven delegates under the resolution of the previous legislature for that purpose. But events anticipated the election, and it was never held. The Governors of the Southern States, who were all disunionists, paid no attention to Houston's letters. He was denounced everywhere as a traitor to the South. Senator Wigfall said in Virginia that he ought to be tarred and feathered and driven from the State. Senator Iverson, of Georgia, his old antagonist in the Senate, went so far as to hint at his assassination. He said, "Some Texan Brutus may arise to rid his country of this old, hoary-headed traitor."

Lincoln was elected. South Carolina seceded, and applied to the other Southern States to unite and form a confederacy. The demand for action on the invitation was so strong that Houston called a special session of the legislature to meet January 21. Already illegal steps had been taken to force the State out of the Union. A proclamation had been issued from Austin, signed by about sixty citizens, clerks in the departments and others, calling for a general

election to be held on January 8, for a convention of delegates from the people to meet on January 28. The election was held, but only a comparatively few of the people recognized its validity, the total number of votes cast being less than 10,000. It was to forestall the action of this illegal body that Houston called the legislature together and recommended a properly called and constituted convention. In his message he declared that he believed that the time had come for the people of Texas to take action in accordance with their sovereign will. While deploring the election of Messrs. Lincoln and Hamlin, he could see no reason in it for the immediate and separate secession of Texas. He deprecated any hasty action, and thought that means should be taken for the people to express their will by legal means. "They have stood aloof from revolutionary measures, and now demand an opportunity to express their will through the ballot box." He had not lost faith that their rights could be maintained in the Union, and that it might yet be perpetuated. Between constitutional remedies and anarchy and civil war, he could see no middle course. In his message, January 24, transmitting the resolutions of the legislature of South Carolina, Houston declared his "unqualified protest against and dissent from the principles enunciated in the resolutions." He argued against the right of secession on constitutional grounds, and showed the total lack of any guarantee of permanency in a new confederacy. He concluded:—

“I would therefore recommend the adoption of resolutions dissenting from the assertion of the abstract right of secession and refusing to send deputies for any present existing cause, and urging upon the people of all the States, North and South, the necessity of cultivating brotherly feeling, observing justice, and attending to their own affairs.”

The convention met on the day appointed, and the legislature promptly adopted a resolution recognizing its authority. Houston vetoed it on the ground that its election had been illegal. The resolution was passed over his veto. The convention immediately adopted an ordinance of secession by a vote of 167 to 7, and provided for its submission to the people at an election on February 23. Without waiting for its ratification, the convention elected delegates to the Congress of the Southern States at Montgomery, and appointed a Committee of Public Safety, of which John C. Robertson was president. The Committee of Public Safety immediately took steps to secure the arms and military property of the United States, and appointed three commissioners to arrange for the terms of their surrender with General David E. Twiggs, the commander of the troops in the Department.

The military Department of Texas was the most important and richly supplied of any in the United States. The demands for the protection of the line of the Rio Grande against the predatory incursions of the Mexicans, and of the exposed frontiers against

the dangerous wild tribes of Indians, had called a large portion of the army to be stationed there. It was scattered in various posts along the Rio Grande and on the northern frontier for more than a thousand miles, and numbered about 2500 men. There was an immense amount of arms and military stores collected at the headquarters of the Department at San Antonio. General Twiggs, the commander of the Department, was an old and somewhat distinguished officer of the army. He was in feeble health, and had long been on leave of absence at his residence in Louisiana. He sympathized thoroughly with the secession movement, and was undoubtedly in communication with its leaders. He returned unexpectedly to resume the command on the 5th of December, 1860, superseding Colonel Robert E. Lee, who perhaps could not be relied on to do the necessary work. He immediately began issuing leaves of absence to the officers, and still farther scattering the troops. He expressed himself as convinced that the Union was already dissolved, and declared that he would never order his soldiers to fire on American citizens. He intimated that when a demand was made on him by the State, he would surrender the property of the government. Houston was informed of these assertions on the part of Twiggs, and for the purpose of testing him, or of obtaining the control of the arms in his own hands to thwart the designs of the secessionists, he sent on January 20, the day before the meeting of the legislature, a special messenger to Twiggs with the following letter:—

MY DEAR GENERAL, — The present pressure of important events necessarily induces prompt action on the part of all public functionaries. In this view of the matter, I send to you General J. M. Smith of this State on a confidential mission, to know what in the present crisis you consider your duty to do, as to maintaining in behalf of the Federal Government or passing over to the State the possession of the posts, arsenals, and public property within the State; and also, if a demand for the possession of the same is made by the Executive, you are authorized, or it would be conformable to your sense of duty, to place in possession of the authorities of the State the posts, arms, munitions, and property of the Federal Government, on the order of the Executive, to an officer of the State, empowered to receive and receipt for the same.

The course is suggested by the fact that information has reached the Executive that an effort will be made by an unauthorized mob to take forcibly and appropriate the public stores and property to uses of their own, assuming to act on behalf of the State.

Any arrangements made with you by General Smith will be sanctioned and approved by me, and should you require any assistance in resisting the contemplated and unauthorized attack upon the public property, and to place the same in possession of the state authorities, you are authorized to call on the mayor and citizens of San Antonio for such assistance as you may deem necessary.

I will hope to hear from you, General, by my confidential agent, General Smith, as soon as he can have the honor of a conference with you on matters embraced in the present epoch of our national affairs.

I am, General, yours very truly,
SAM HOUSTON.

But Twiggs had no intention of putting the arms into the hands of any such Union man as Houston. He replied curtly that he was without instructions from the government, and that "after secession, in case the Executive of the State makes a demand upon the commander of the Department, he will receive an answer."

Whether Houston believed that by obtaining possession of the arms he could overawe the disunionists and prevent the secession of the State, or whether he merely wished to obtain a definite knowledge of the purposes of Twiggs, is unknown. His whole course showed that he preferred to submit to secession rather than to involve the State in civil war, although, perhaps, if he had been supported by the Federal Government before the movement became so strong he might have resisted it. An account given by Rev. William M. Baker would indicate that he had such a purpose. A Texan merchant, and intimate friend of Houston's, stated that Houston informed him that President Lincoln, although not yet inaugurated, had sent Colonel F. W. Lander to him with a message

that he should have all the help he wanted, as soon as Lincoln took office, if he could only hold the State until then. Said Houston, "General Twiggs has agreed to do what he can to help me. I have 800 men waiting to come at a word. Volunteers will come in. I am sure that I can, with the aid of General Twiggs, hold Texas against any force the Confederacy may send." He then made a contract with the merchant for a supply of rations. The following is the account of the interview with Houston after he had received General Twiggs's reply to his message:—

"The instant the Governor had locked me with him in his inner office, he turned to me with rage in his face. 'Sir,' said he to me, in a manner and tone which I can never forget, 'Twiggs is a traitor!' Then he sank down into his chair, the tears trickling down his heroic countenance, and sobbed like a child. He then clenched his fist and smote the table, with what seemed to be a suppressed curse, long and deep. After he had somewhat recovered he repeated to me the message that Captain Smith had brought him from Twiggs. It was in such cautious language as to the General's isolation and want of instructions from Washington that I suggested to Governor Houston that possibly he misunderstood General Twiggs. 'No,' the Governor exclaimed, again smiting the table with his huge fist, 'there can be no mistake. Twiggs is a traitor! We are to have a fearful civil war.' And he appealed to God for wisdom

and protection in a manner which touched me to the heart."

There was unquestionably a force in Texas which Houston could have called on, ardent supporters of himself as well as advocates of the Union, and he might perhaps, with the aid of the United States troops, have defeated the secession element. But it would have plunged the State into a civil war, and the action of Twiggs prevented the show of any commanding strength at first to turn the scale in favor of the Unionists.

The commissioners appointed by the Committee of Public Safety acted promptly. On February 11 they made a demand upon General Twiggs for the surrender of all the arms, munitions of war, and public property belonging to the United States in the Department of Texas. There were some negotiations between the commissioners and the board of officers appointed by General Twiggs in regard to terms. Twiggs insisted upon the retention of the arms then in the hands of the soldiers, and of some pieces of light artillery. Colonel Benjamin M'Culloch had been appointed by the Committee of Public Safety to raise and take command of troops in behalf of the State, and appeared in San Antonio with a force of about 1200 men. The terms of the surrender were agreed upon. The troops were to have transportation to the coast, and to be permitted to return to the United States. The debts due from the quartermaster's department were to be paid out of the funds

delivered to the commissioners. The soldiers were to retain their arms. The surrender was executed on February 18, before the people had voted on the ordinance of secession, and after an order had arrived from Washington, relieving General Twiggs from the command of the Department and directing him to turn it over to Colonel Carlos A. Waite, the senior officer. Colonel Waite was absent from San Antonio, but arrived a few hours after the surrender was made. The number of men surrendered was about 2500, and the value of the property \$1,200,000. The sum of \$50,000 in money was turned over to the commissioners, and they afterward seized \$30,000 sent to the State to pay the troops. Bodies of Texan troops were sent to demand the surrender of the various detachments in the forts and posts along the Rio Grande and on the frontier, and, after some indignant remonstrances on the part of the officers in command, they were given up. Strong efforts were made to induce the officers and men to take service with the Confederacy, but only a few of the officers of Southern birth did so, almost all of the enlisted men remaining faithful to their flag. General Twiggs, having accomplished his purpose, returned to New Orleans, and on March 1 was dismissed from the army for treachery by order of Secretary Holt. Owing to the lack of transportation, but few of the troops were removed from Texas before the outbreak of the war between the United States and the Confederacy, and the remainder were

made prisoners of war, in violation of the agreement with the commissioners, by order of Colonel Van Dorn, and compelled to give their parole not to bear arms against the Confederacy until exchanged.

Whatever purpose Houston may have entertained at the beginning of the troubles, he abandoned any design of forcible resistance to secession after the surrender of the United States troops. On March 18, after the new administration of Lincoln had determined to maintain the Union by force, General Scott sent orders to Colonel Waite to form an intrenched camp at Indianola, and put himself in communication with Governor Houston, to offer him assistance in defense of the Federal authority. If neither Houston nor any other authority had any considerable number of men in arms in defense of the Federal Government, Colonel Waite was to consider his orders to form an intrenched camp withdrawn. Colonel Waite communicated with Houston, offering his assistance, and received the following reply:—

AUSTIN, *March 29, 1861.*

DEAR SIR, — I have received intelligence that you have, or will soon receive orders to concentrate United States troops under your command at Indianola, in this State, to sustain me in the exercise of my official functions. Allow me most respectfully to decline any such assistance of the United States government, and to most earnestly protest against the concentration of troops in fortifications in Texas, and

request that you remove all such troops out of the State at the earliest day practicable, or, at any rate, by all means take no action towards hostile movements till farther ordered by the Government at Washington City, or particularly of Texas.

Thine,

SAM HOUSTON.

Colonel Lander also wrote to Colonel Waite advising him to take no action that would give the secession party the idea that the Federal Government intended to coerce the State. Colonel Waite informed General Scott that it was the feeling of the Unionists that they could effect a peaceable change in the views of the inhabitants of the State by means of the press and the ballot box, and that they believed that a few thousand dollars in the support of newspapers throughout the State would produce a complete revolution in public sentiment. There was evidently at first a considerable Union sentiment among the people of Texas. In San Antonio there was a strong party opposed to secession, and in Austin a large mass meeting was held just before the election on the secession ordinance, at which there was a pole erected and a United States flag displayed.

Houston made a speech at Galveston, which was the hot-bed of secession, a few days before the election. When he arrived his friends gathered about him, and asked him not to speak, as there was imminent danger of mob violence. He replied that he had been threatened before, and should certainly

make his speech. It was delivered from the balcony of the Tremont House at eleven o'clock in the forenoon to an excited throng that filled the street. As he had often done before, Houston overawed the crowd, and compelled a respectful attention. Mr. Thomas North, a Northern man who lived in Texas during the war, thus describes Houston's appearance when speaking:—

“There he stood, an old man of seventy years, on the balcony ten feet above the heads of the thousands assembled to hear him, where every eye could scan his magnificent form, six feet and three inches high, straight as an arrow, with deep-set and penetrating eyes, looking out from heavy and thundering eyebrows, a high open forehead, with something of the infinite intellectual shadowed there, crowned with the white locks, partly erect, seeming to give capillary conduction to the electric fluid used by his massive brain, and a voice of the deep basso tone, which shook and commanded the soul of the hearer; adding to all this a powerful manner, made up of deliberation, self-possession, and restrained majesty of action, leaving the hearer impressed with the feeling that more of his power was hidden than revealed. Thus appeared Sam Houston on this grand occasion, equal and superior to it, as he always was to every other. He paralyzed the arm of the mobocrat by his personal presence, and it was morally impossible for him to be mobbed in Texas, and, if not there, then not anywhere.”

He spoke with great force and eloquence of the disasters which would surely follow secession, and of the certainty of the defeat of the South. He said:

“Some of you laugh to scorn the idea of bloodshed as the result of secession, and jocularly propose to drink all the blood that will ever flow in consequence of it. But let me tell you what is coming on the heels of secession. The time will come when your fathers and husbands, your sons and brothers, will be herded together like sheep and cattle at the point of the bayonet; and your mothers and wives, and sisters and daughters, will ask, ‘Where are they?’ and echo will answer, Where? You may, after the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of precious lives, as a bare possibility, win Southern independence, if God be not against you; but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of state rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction, where great interests are involved, such as the present issue before the country, they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South with ignoble defeat, and I would say Amen to the suffering and defeat I have pictured, if the present difficulties could find no other solution, and that, too, by peaceable means. I believe they can. Otherwise I would say, ‘Better die freemen than live slaves.’”

In conclusion he said, however, that he should abide by the action of his State:—

“Whatever course my State shall determine to pursue, my faith in state supremacy and state rights will carry my sympathies with her. And as Henry Clay, my political opponent on annexation, said, when asked why he allowed his son to go into the Mexican war, ‘My country, right or wrong,’ so I say, My State, right or wrong.”

But Houston could not stem the tide. The secessionists were active and violent. Armed bands intimidated the citizens, and mob rule prevailed. In some sections Union men were hung, or compelled to flee for their lives. Houses were burned, and property destroyed. The Union men were still farther discouraged by the news of the surrender of Twiggs, and that the Federal Government made no sign of giving them support. But the prevalence of the Union sentiment was indicated by the fact that at the election out of about 80,000 voters only 52,246 cast their ballots. Of these 34,415 were for secession, and 13,841 against it.

The convention reassembled after the election, and took steps to unite Texas with the Confederacy. It accepted the Confederate Constitution, and elected members of the Confederate Congress. A committee was appointed to inform Houston of its action. He protested against it, declaring that the convention had no farther authority from the people after it had submitted the ordinance of secession for their ratifica-

tion. In the mean time the Confederate authorities had assumed jurisdiction over Texas. Before the convention had reassembled, L. Pope Walker, the Confederate Secretary of War, sent a circular to Houston announcing that the President of the Confederate States assumed control of all military operations in the State, and over all questions relating to foreign powers. Houston replied that by the act of secession Texas had become independent, and was not yet united with the Confederacy. He denied the authority of the convention to unite Texas with the Confederate States without the sanction of the people. The protest was in mild terms, and at its conclusion he said:—

“The States which have formed the Provisional Government have his ardent wishes for their welfare and prosperity. The people of Texas are now bound to them in feeling and sympathy no less closely than when members of a common Union. Like circumstances induced withdrawal from the Union. Like peril and uncertainty are before them. No matter what the position of Texas may be, she cannot but feel that ties of no common nature bind her to those States. But, however close those ties may be in feeling, there are requirements due the national pride and dignity of a people who have just resumed their nationality which do not sanction the course pursued in annexing them to a new government without their knowledge or consent.”

On March 14, the convention adopted an ordinance

requiring the State officers to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. Houston and E. W. Cave, the Secretary of State, declined to obey the order. When the day came to take the oath the presiding officer of the convention called three times, "Sam Houston, Sam Houston, Sam Houston," but the governor remained in his office in the basement of the Capitol, whittling his pine stick, and hearing the echo of the noise and tumult in the hall above his head. Houston and Cave were declared deposed from their offices, and Edward Clark, the lieutenant governor, was installed as governor. Houston protested, and appealed to the legislature, which assembled on the 18th, but it confirmed the action of the convention. Houston issued an address to the people protesting against the illegal acts and usurpations of the convention. But he declared that he should make no attempt to retain his position by force. He said:—

"I love Texas too well to bring civil strife and bloodshed upon her. To avert this calamity I shall make no endeavor to maintain my authority as chief executive of the State, except by the peaceful exercise of my functions. When I can no longer do this I shall calmly withdraw from the scene, leaving the government in the hands of those who have usurped its authority, but still claiming that I am its chief executive. I protest in the name of the people of Texas against all the acts and doings of this convention, and declare them null and void. I solemnly

protest against the act of its members, who are bound by no oath themselves, in declaring my office vacant because I refuse to appear before it and take the oath prescribed."

He still continued to go to his office, but on the morning of March 21 he found that Governor Clark had installed himself in the room before him. A hostile newspaper gives this account of their interview:—

"By and by the deposed Governor came hobbling into the office, old Sam's San Jacinto wound having broken out afresh, as it always does on occasions of political trial. Perceiving Governor Clark occupying his chair, old Sam addressed him:—

"'Well, *Governor* Clark,' giving great emphasis to the title, 'you are an early riser.'

"'Yes, *General*,' with a great stress upon the military title of his predecessor, 'I am illustrating the old maxim, the early bird catches the worm.'

"'Well, Governor Clark, I hope you will find it an easier seat than I have found it.'

"'I'll endeavor to make it so, General, by conforming to the clearly expressed wish of the people of Texas.'

"The General, having brought a large lunch basket with him, proceeded to put in numerous little articles of private property, and to stow them away very carefully. Catching his foot in a hole in the carpet, and stumbling, the General suggested to Governor Clark that the new Government ought to afford a new

carpet for the Governor's office, whereupon the Governor remarked that the Executive of Texas could get along very well without a carpet.

"Having gathered up his duds, old Sam made a little farewell speech very much in the style of Cardinal Wolsey, declaring his conviction that, as in the past, Texas would call him from his retirement, and he hoped Governor Clark would be able to give as good an account of his stewardship as he could now render. Halting at the door the General made a profound bow, and with an air of elaborate dignity said, 'Good-day, Governor C-l-a-r-k.' 'Good-day, General Houston,' was the Governor's response."

Houston left Austin, and returned to his residence in Huntsville, a small town in Walker County. An enemy wrote, "Houston has sunk out of sight, leaving but a ripple on the surface."

Houston's action in reference to the secession of Texas has been much criticised, and he has been accused of inconsistency and pusillanimity. He certainly did not take the course of Francis P. Blair in Missouri in organizing an armed resistance to secession. He might possibly have done so, if he had been supported by General Twiggs, as Blair was by General Lyon. But it is probable that he would only have hoped to strengthen and give force to the Union sentiment, and overawe the secession element without bloodshed. It is within the bounds of possibility that, if Twiggs had taken a different course, the Union feeling might have prevailed. It is doubtful

if the majority of the people of Texas were in favor of secession at the time the vote was taken. But events shaped themselves so that there could not have been a resistance without a bloody civil war within the State. Houston loved his people too much to precipitate this. It is to be remembered, also, that Houston was a Southern man, and, while he ardently loved the Union, and regretted secession as a matter of policy, his feelings were with his section. When the die was cast, his hopes and sympathies were for the success of the South. There is no reason to doubt his sincerity in saying that he yielded up his office rather than subject the people to the horrors of a civil war, and that he was with his State, right or wrong. His courage and firmness were abundantly proved in his resistance to the tumults and violence of secession, and the very serious dangers which accompanied them. The excitement ran tremendously high, and it was by no means impossible that some "Texan Brutus" might have taken Senator Iverson's advice to assassinate him. Events were too strong for Houston. The position of Texas made her naturally a member of the Southern Confederacy. The Union sentiment was rather inert and indefinite, instead of active and passionate like that of the secessionists. It could not have triumphed without a civil war, and it is doubtful if a majority of the Unionists were ready for that, even if Houston had been willing to lead them. The people were mainly Southern, and when the Federal Government proclaimed its purpose

of coercing the seceded States, all but a few, excepting the German colonists, threw themselves heart and soul into the Confederate cause. It is possible that Houston hoped for a brief time that Texas, having seceded, would resume her independent sovereignty, and he was suspected of working for that end. But he must have soon seen that it was impossible, and have recognized that the fortunes of Texas were bound up with those of the rest of the slave-holding States. He realized the probabilities of the failure of the Confederacy, but he would not join in overthrowing the fortunes of his section, and he did not feel that allegiance to the Union which would compel him to fight against his people. His course was honorable and consistent from his point of view, and it was that almost universally taken by the original Union men of the South. He refused the offer of a major-general's commission from President Lincoln, and had no hope or ambition that was not identified with the welfare of the people of Texas. His eldest son entered the Confederate service, and he fitted him out with his arms and equipments. There is a good-humored jest attributed to him to the effect that he told his son that the most appropriate place for his secession rosette would be on the inside of the tail of his coat, but he subsequently said that if he had more sons old enough for the service they should go. He was for the Union, if it could be preserved by peaceful means, but for the South when the issue was made of resistance or submission to Federal coercion.

During his administration as governor there was no opportunity for attention to the internal affairs of the State. Everything was swept into the vortex of political strife and excitement. The only measure he could accomplish was the organization of a ranging force for the protection of the frontier, which fell to pieces during the secession excitement, leaving the people defenseless after the United States troops surrendered.