ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN MEXICO 1823-1830

That Mexico had been Spain's richest viceroyalty and that it lay contiguous to a powerful, if not aggressive neighbour, were to two paramount factors in determining the international status of the newly formed republic. And the self-imposed burden of defining the status of the Latin American Republics in general and of Mexico in particular, as a matter of course, could devolve upon no others than the United States and Great Britain. Upon Great Britain because of its far-flung maritime interests, and, upon the United States because of its contiguity to the lands of the crumbling empire and its alleged imperialistic propensities. Whether such circumstances were necessary and sufficient to produce a "spirited rivalry" between the two powers, is another question, as there were many another point at variance and crosspurposes intersperced throughout the looming conflict.

The kaleidoscopic events in Latin America evoked secret, imperialistic ambitions in the Puritan bosom of Mexico's northern neighbour. The Florida Treaty of 1819 was neither sacred nor definite enough to preclude any future modification of the boundary.[1] It had neither allayed Spain's outraged feelings nor satisfied the seeming cravings of the men of "Manifest Destiny". Such a mutually unsatisfactory pact

[1] *The Official Correspondence between John Quincy Adams and Don Luis de Onís*, London, 1818.

should and ought to be revised, time and circumstances permitting.

Then too, in Spain's hands still lay the "Pearl" of the Antillas. That it should not reward a Frank, fall prey to a Briton, or, much less, decorate the "cap of liberty" of the Latin Republics, the American Yankee was bent to prevent at any cost.[2] Cuba must remain Spanish, at least for the time being, until future may unfold a different plan for its disposition.

The United States might well have said that in order to redress the balance of the "Unholy Alliance" of European powers, a new, a holy alliance of the American Republics, was needed. The role of leadership in such a confederacy would evidently go to the United States.[3] The reasons for supposing such an ascendency of one over the many are too obvious and too many to enumerate them here.

It was partly due to these exclusive aims that caused J. Q. Adams, then secretary of state, to reject Canning's proposal of a joint declaration of a policy of non-intervention in Spanish America.[4] An aspect of the Monroe Doctrine is the assertion of the political and economic supremacy of the United States in the western hemisphere.

None of these objectives pursued by the United States could be achieved without crossing the path of Great Britain. Her colonial empire, her maritime supremacy, as well as her European position demanded an active interest in the broken up— once imperial— Spain. Republican form of

[2] W. R. MANNING: *Early Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Mexico,* London, 1926, ch. 4.

[3] J. F. RIPPY: *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin America (1808-1830),* Baltimore, 1929, p. 180. H. TEMPERLEY: *The Foreign Policy of George Canning, 1822-1827,* London, 1926, p. 128.

[4] CHARLES R. SALIT: "La Política de no Intervención de Canning en la América Española", *Boletín del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas,* Nº 54, XV, Oct-Dec., 1932.

government in Latin America meant the ascendency of the United States. It would be but natural for the new Republics to look up to their northern model and submit themselves to its influences to the exclusion of others. To counteract such tendencies Great Britain committed herself to a policy of encouraging the principles of constitutional monarchy in the former Spanish colonies. It was partly due to the vain hopes of a monarchical land-slide in Latin America that Canning with-held as long as he did his full recognition of the new Republics.[5]

But Great Britain was equally determined to prevent the ascendency of any European power in the New World (ironically enough, Spain was declared free from any such restraint). At Aix-la-Chapelle, Castlereagh had forced all powers to disavow any aggressive designs towards the colonies.[6] France, however, was soon engaged in plots of planting Bourbon princes on American thrones. In 1823, after restoring legitimism on the Spanish throne, she was in a good position to expect, if not demand, a suitable compensation for her troubles. And, if any reward was forthcoming, it would be in the nature of a rebellious Spanish colony, given in payment for well-received services and destined thereby to an effective punishment.

Along with these developments grew Canning's apprehensions of French designs. It was at this time that he decided to "call into existence a New World to redress the balance of the Old". To off-set his diplomatic defeat in Europe he must win diplomatic prestige in Spanish America.[7] By this time he also was convinced that republicanism was there to stay and that it was futile to wait any longer for monarchical possibilities. If he did not want to see the

[5] TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 113.

[6] SALIT, "La Politica de no Intervención de Canning en la América Española", (Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas).

[7] TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 103.

United States too far ahead in the field he must extend immediate recognition to the republics and exert all the influence that such a recognition may permit.

That the United States would contest any attempts to link the New to the Old World was clearly enough expressed in the Monroe Doctrine. But to what extent would the United States assert this doctrine, remained as yet to be seen. It was not until urgent inquiries were made by some of the sorely pressed republics that Adams and Clay let them know that the pursuance of the policy would hardly extend beyond diplomatic repartee.[8]

It was then this interpretation of the policy of the United States that was in a measure responsible for the coolness with which Mexico viewed her northern neighbour. And likewise, it furnishes us with a partial explanation, at any rate, why Mexico so readily extended to Great Britain concessions she refused to grant to the United States. Furthermore, Great Britain had assured Mexico that she desired no portion of Spanish colonies in America and would not allow them to fall "under the dominion of any other power." [9] This was something more than what the United States had committed herself to.

The United States had preceded Great Britain in the recognition of the Republic of Mexico by about two years. And yet it was the day following Henry G. Ward's presentation of his credentials, as the chargé d'affaires, that President Victoria received Poinsett for a similar purpose.[10] The "de jure" recognition by the United States had been more than counterbalanced by Great Britain's "de facto" contacts and the interchange of commissioners with Mexico.

[8] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 59. FRANCISCO JAVIER GAXIOLA: *Poinsett en México (1822-1828)*, México, 1936, p. 74. D. PERKINS: *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826*, Cambridge, 1927, pp. 201-2.

[9] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 249.

[10] GAXIOLA, *Poinsett en México*, p. 31.

True enough, Poinsett was in Mexico in the capacity of Monroe's confidential agent as early as 1822. His report, however, on Iturbide's government was not favourable. In the first place, because it was an empire, in the second place, because it was not even a good empire and whose fall Poinsett accurately surmised.[11]

Canning had appointed Dr. Mackie in a similar capacity of a confidential agent at the time Joel R. Poinsett was making these unfavourable observations. But by the time Mackie arrived the empire of Iturbide had vanished. In its place he found a provisional government whose agent, Guadalupe Victoria, refused to pledge his government to a policy of excluding all other powers from commercial agreements until one had been consummated with Great Britain.[12] But in spite of it, Victoria was favourably disposed towards the British. Of the United States, according to Mackie, he could speak only with contempt.[13]

To meet the new situation Canning appointed a commission of three. According to his instructions, the impression it should convey to the Mexican government was that England would consider favourably a hereditary constitutional monarchy, so it would serve as a barrier to a United States expansion southward. It was also to assure the government of Mexico that England entertained no wish for dominion over any portion of Spain's former colonies of America.[14] Its main task, however, was to sound the possibilities of a recognition.

Lionel Hervey, the head of the commission, lacked the thorough knowledge of Mexico that Poinsett had at his com-

[11] JOEL R. POINSETT: *Notes on Mexico*, Philadelphia, 1824, pp. 67-69. GAXIOLA, p. 33. MANNING, p. 34.

[12] C. J. STILLÉ: *The Life and Services of Joel R. Poinsett*, Philadelphia, 1888, p. 31.

[13] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States & Great Britain*, p. 249.

[14] *Ibid.*: TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 138.

mand.[15] The commissioners were naively enough enthused over the "progress" made by Mexico. After a three-weeks investigation, even ignorant of the growing proportions of the revolution at Lobato, they reported on the peaceful conditions of the land and urged immediate recognition. Hervey even went as far as to guarantee a loan to Mexico in the name of Great Britain.[16] For this voluntary, extra service, Canning had him replaced by J. P. Morier.

Help up by French and Spanish opposition as well by the hopes of an eventual monarchical turn in Mexico, Canning still hesitated in extending a recognition. In vain his commission wrote him that "the Mexicans are looking anxiously around them in quest of an Alliance with one of the Great Maritime Powers of Europe and if they should be disappointed in their hopes, they will ultimately be forced to throw themselves into the arms of the United States, already opened wide to receive them".[17] Canning had the commission recommend to the Mexican government a suitable envoy to England. Such a man the commission thought to have found in Michelena, and accordingly he was sent to London. The British foreign minister received him as if he were a regularly accredited chargé d'affaires[18] and consultations as well as negotiations were begun which finally, January 1825, materialized in an official recognition of Mexico. "It was impossible," he justified himself before Metternich, "to let these colonies fall under the moral domination of the United States".[19]

Without awaiting the appointments and interchange of the regular chargés d'affaires, Canning ordered at once the

[15] GAXIOLA, *Poinsett en México*, pp. 23-35.

[16] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 62-63; RIPPY, p. 250.

[17] RIPPY, p. 249.

[18] MANNING, pp. 63-64.

[19] TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 241.

for the diplomatic post until after the pending elections.[22] Adams's choice, however, of Henry Clay as secretary of state left Poinsett no alternative. In March 1825 he accepted his appointment as a chargé d'affaires to Mexico.

Here Mr. Poinsett found an aggressive rival in the British representative, Henry G. Ward, and an administration exceedingly friendly disposed towards his colleague's government. President Victoria on the reception of Mr. Ward had referred to England as the great nation which was accustomed to sustain the liberties of the world.[23] To which Poinsett could only write to Clay that "It is manifest that the British have made good use of their time and opportunities".[24] Poinsett, however, was not to be outdone. In his reception speech he congratulated the Mexican people on their choice of constitution that was so similar to that of the United States. He called their attention to the existing sympathies between the two countries and how readily his country had extended recognition to theirs, setting thereby a good example for Great Britain to follow.[25]

In the Mexican cabinet Poinsett found Lucas Alamán, secretary of state, and José Ignacio Esteva, secretary of treasury, strongly pro-British. Alamán had formerly served as a director in an English mining company, a seemingly profitable association that might have produced this sympathetic attitude.[26] Esteva was partial to the English by virtue of his office as a treasurer and his anxiety of obtaining a foreign loan.

Poinsett's instructions read that he was to negotiate treaties of commerce and limits, and to encourage repub-

[22] Poinsett's letter to Dr. Jos. Johnson, Feb. 4, 1825, Poinsett's Papers in Henry D. Gilpin Collection, Gilpin Library, Philadelphia.

[23] Poinsett to Johnson, Oct. 31, 1825, Gilpin Collection.

[24] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 52.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[26] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 76.

commission to proceed with the arrangements for a commercial treaty. Accordingly in April such a treaty was drawn up, recommended by the commission, approved by the Mexican Congress, only to be rejected by Canning.

The treaty as a whole and the reasons for Canning's rejecting it, do not concern us here, except for a clause favouring exclusive privileges to Latin American Republics, a clause which also proved a stumbling block to Poinsett's future success.

Partly due to Mexico's own internal disorders and partly to the United States political party struggles and the spoil system, nothing much had been done in the way of diplomatic relations since the recognition in December, 1822. Zozaya, the first Mexican envoy in Washington, returned home for instructions upon the fall of Iturbide. Torrens, the secretary of the legation, remained as a temporary chargé d'affaires. In the turmoil of a revolution, and due to the precarious existence of the provisional government, he was almost forgotten and left penniless at the mercies of his landlady. With the appointment of Pablo Obregón to the Washington post in August 1824, diplomatic relations were really for the first time established.[20]

John Q. Adams had been accused of dilly-dallying with the Mexican appointment in order to purchase the needed support in the coming presidential election. He even had hit upon the brilliant possibility of removing his adversary, Andrew Jackson, by offering to him this vacancy.[21] In the mean time, Poinsett, having himself an eye on the secretarship of state, held himself aloof, after giving a strong hint that he did not wish to be considered an immediate candidate

[20] GAXIOLA, *Poinsett en México,* p. 38.

[21] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations,* p. 42; GAXIOLA, *Poinsett en México,* p. 41.

licanism in Mexico.[27] But as things stood, confronted by a hostile English envoy and an indifferent administration, nothing could be achieved in the face of such obstacles. He therefore sought support among the opposition that was growing in strength in and without the Congress. Should he have stuck with the government he would have to trail along after Great Britain, and get "on smoothely and insignificantly".[28] Upon the request of Senator Father Alpuche, he procured charters for the York Rite masons and installed the Grand Lodge.[29] By associating himself with this secret organization of the opposition could he hope to be heard by the administration. In fact, it alarmed the president and his cabinet to a degree that it effected Alamán's dismissal and a modification in the attitude towards the United States in the rest of the members of the government.[30]

The affiliation with a masonic order by no means was a unique procedure for a diplomat to follow. Ward, in fact most Europeans, was known to be similarly associated with the Scottish Rite masons. With the Scottish order, however, were linked the conservatives, which included most of the members of the administration, the landed aristocracy, and the church, while with the York Rite masons were associated the liberals and the opposition in general. It is then for this reason that Poinsett was subject to such an undue criticism. In particular, when the York Rite order deteriorated into a pure political machine of the opposition, were his connections universally condemned. When this was the case he, however, withdrew from the organization, but too late to

[27] Poinsett to Johnson, Oct. 31, 1825, Gilpin Collection; also, MANNING, p. 46.

[28] J. H. SMITH: "Poinsett's Career in Mexico", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society,* vol. 24, Oct. 1914, p. 84.

[29] *Ibid.*; also, Poinsett to Johnson, Oct. 6, 1827, and, Poinsett's address before the Mexican Legislature, Aug. 7, 1829, Gilpin Coll.

[30] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain,* p. 256; also, MANNING, p. 77.

effect an appreciable change in the attitude of those who had renounced him.

While Poinsett had been at the height of his power, as a result of his associations with the opposition, Ward was much alarmed. To Canning he disclosed Poinsett's ambitions and influence: "The formation of a general American federation, from which all European Powers, but more particularly Great Britain, shall be excluded, is the great object of Mr. Poinsett's exertions".[31] He likewise informed his chief that "many members of both chambers" favoured such a plan.

Señor Michelena had been recalled from London upon the request of Canning, and, as might be expected, had turned anti-British. Ward now feared that through Poinsett's influence he might be appointed delegate to the mooted Panama Congress. To undermine effectively any such pernicious power, Ward allowed no opportunity to slip by to thwart his dangerous rival. To this end he expended funds with a lavish hand. He had gone to a great expense in preparing a map of Texas and in reprinting the Onis memorial on the covetousness of the United States for this particular piece of Mexican territory.[32]

Poinsett, of course, would retaliate in kind. Diplomatic occasions, such as banquets or dinners, proved convenient opportunities to slight each other by the failure to invite the rival. Ill-concealed insults were freely exchanged in the form of toasts that, if clever enough, would be published the following day.

These pueril innuendos resulted in an unpleasant epi-

[31] Poinsett to Johnson, Oct. 31, 1825, Gilpin Collection; also, RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 257.

[32] Poinsett to Martin Van Buren, secretary of state, Aug. 2, 1829, Gilpin Coll. *Official Correspondence between J. Q. Adams and Don Luis de Onís;* TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 269.

sode [33] at the Irish banquet on St. Patrick's day. In responding to a flattering toast from an Irishman, Poinsett referred to the Irish struggle for civil and religious liberties and expressed the hope that they would soon enjoy these liberties in as complete a measure as they could enjoy them in the United States. "To the Irish", as Ward later remarked, "he was sustaining the cause of liberality: to the Mexicans, that of the Catholic Religion". Ward's repartee on that occasion consisted in alluding to the "noble restraint of the Irish" (facts to the contrary notwithstanding); "during the whole course of their struggle for those Rights to which they conceived themselves so justly entitled, they had never either sought the interference, or solicited the sympathy of a Foreign Power!". This was to insinuate that Poinsett had been meddling in Mexican politics. By this time many important guests began to leave, including Mr. Ward himself. The British-American rivalry had exceeded the hospitality and the good manners of the Irish.

As we recall, by the time Poinsett arrived in Mexico, in the middle part of 1825, the British had already negotiated and rejected a commercial treaty with Mexico.[34] After securing a strong following in the opposition Poinsett now proceeded to carry out some of his instructions. However, the obstacles proved too strong to consummate immediately a treaty of commerce and limits. The main stumbling block proved to be a clause on the flag and merchant vessels. The way Poinsett wanted it to read was obviously directed against the British.[35] Furthermore, the Mexican negotiators preferred a somewhat one-sided "most-favoured-nation" treatment, all to the good of the Spanish American Republics.[36]

[33] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, pp. 279-80.

[34] See above, page 71.

[35] GAXIOLA, *Poinsett en México*, p. 75.

[36] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 21. For a full discussion of the commercial treaty, see Gaxiola's Ch. VI, as above.

Poinsett, at first with some success, but later in vain, pleaded with Ward to cooperate with him in abrogating this principle of special privileges to the Latins, an exception equally objectionable to the British. The whole negotiation was temporarilly dropped.

Meanwhile Canning had ordered the resumption of a new treaty negotiations. On October 14, 1825 he wrote Ward that the new treaty must be "signed precisely according to the Project which you are instructed to bring forward, or not at all". In his instructions to Ward he had carefully outlined Britain's policy of a great sea-power. It called for a close definition of the rights of neutrals, use of the flag on Mexican ships, and as to what was meant by a national vessel.[37] In defining these and other terms, the British foreign minister had the American privateers and merchantmen constantly in mind.[38]

Mexico's failure to agree on these definitions brought the negotiations, begun on January 20, 1826, to a standstill. It was then decided that Sebastian Camacho, secretary of foreign affairs, should proceed to London to discuss this matter with Canning himself. Camacho, however, fell ill, and President Victoria appointed Gómez Pedraza, secretary for war, in his stead. The senate when asked for its consent refused to sanction the choice. Morier and Ward suspected, and rightly so, the hand of their rival in this disagreement. When interviewed, Poinsett admitted that he had exerted his influence to that effect and expressed the hope that no minister be allowed to proceed to England.[39]

By this time Camacho again came up for the appointment. Ward and Poinsett were determined to make of this case an index of their respective influences over Mexico.

[37] Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, pp. 275-77.

[38] On this subject see David Porter's letters to Poinsett, Gilpin Coll.

[39] Rippy, p. 278.

Ward spent large sums of money and entertained in regal style. He gathered his supporters around him, played upon the prejudices of Victoria, and issued threats of rupture between England and Mexico should the senate fail to approve president's choice of Camacho.[40]

Poinsett in his leter to Clay explained that he objected to Camacho absenting himself to England because it would delay his own negotiations for claims. He further asserted that he would exert all his influence to prevent the consummation of the appointment.[41]

April 7, 1826, the senate approved Camacho's mission by 23 to 4. General Bravo, the indefatigable champion of England, commented on the decision: "All those who regard(ed) a connexion with England as essential to the interests (of Mexico) sided with the Government: and ... many, even of Mr. Poinsett's adherents, finding that there would be a majority against them, endeavoured to make a merit with the President by offering him their votes".[42]

Camacho, after some delays, was on his way to London. Here treaty negotiations were resumed and soon approached their completion. February 1827 the treaty was brought back to Mexico and ratified without great difficulties.[43]

Meanwhile, Poinsett had revived the negotiations on the commercial treaty begun in 1825. The pact, although far less favourable to the United States than a similar treaty had been to England, was repeatedly rejected by the Mexican Congress when it came up for vote.[44] The main objection to the treaty was the ommission of the boundary agreement reached by Spain and the United States in 1819. In the

[40] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 278; also, MANNING, pp. 87-88.

[41] *Ibid.*, RIPPY - p. 279.

[42] *Ibid.*, RIPPY - pp. 282-83; MANNING - as above.

[43] RIPPY, p. 284.

[44] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, ch. 7.

making of this ommission into so paramount an issue Ward's hand was plainly to be seen. With a certain sense of premonition he constantly tried to alarm Mexico over the security of Texas. March 31, 1827, writing to Canning, he frankly accused his colleague and rival of serious, diplomatically criminal, charges: "I have no hesitation . . . in expressing my conviction, both publicly and privatly, that the great end of Mr. Poinsett's Mission . . . is to embroil Mexico in a Civil War, and to facilitate . . . the Acquisition of the Provinces to the North of the Rio Bravo . . . ." [45] Ward had allowed his patriotic zeal to exceed the amount of funds assigned to him by Canning. In less than two years he had spent some $50,000.00. Accordingly, in April 1827, he was recalled.

There was no appreciable change in the Anglo-American relations in Mexico when Pakenham came to replace Ward, and upon Canning's death — Dudley took over the foreign office. The Ward-Poinsett vendetta had lost something of its personal acrimony with the appearance of Pakenham, yet the two diplomats were far from cordial towards each other. In 1828, Poinsett, undoubtedly referring to the British chargé, wrote home that "the agents of certain European powers" had represented the United States as the "natural" enemy of Mexico, and so had interfered with the conclusion of a treaty of limits.[46] Later again he wrote: "If we were disposed to judge of the views of the British Government from the conduct of their representatives in Mexico, we should see in them much that was . . . very unfriendly to the United States. We refer to the singular coalition which they formed, as far as their influence extended, to exclude the Minister of the United States from all their social parties, as if there was contagion in his republicanism; to their not only per-

[45] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 285.
[46] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 319.

mitting, but encouraging, toasts to be given at their convivial meetings, hostile to the government he represents; to their intimate union with the aristocratic faction, even when in open rebellion against the government to which they are accredited".[47]

Pakenham had not been on his post more than a couple of months when he declared that Poinsett's "recall, particularly at the present moment, would be a very fortunate occurrance".[48] Great Britain throughout this period had affiliated itself with the conservatives and consistently championed their cause. In 1828 when Nicolás Bravo led the conservative revolt it was with him that Pakenham sympathized. Poinsett with equal consistency identified himself with the liberals, whom Ward and Pakenham called the "American Party". Of them Pakenham wrote: "Their leaders are men of no character", [49] and who are subservient to the schemes of their American coadjutor.

Dudley in his instructions to Pakenham only reiterated the broad, but well defined outlines drafted by his distinguished predecessor. He fully realized the "ambitions" of the United States and the "intriguing" nature of its agent. "It appears", he wrote, "that from the first establishment of Mexican Independence up to the present moment, the wishes of his Government —powerfully seconded by his own ambitions and intriguing temper— have engaged the American Minister, Mr. Poinsett, in a constant and active interference with the internal affairs of the new State. He has made himself a partisan, and almost a chief, in the domestic factions of Mexico. . . ." [50] The factional strife in Mexico may lend

[47] Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, pp. 287-88. Also, Poinsett to Johnson, Aug. 15, 1827.

[48] Rippy, p. 289.

[49] Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 291. Also, Poinsett to Johnson, Nov. 20, 1826, Gilpin Coll.

[50] Rippy, p. 293. Poinsett to Johnson, Nov. 10, 1826.

itself very readily to the artful designs of the United States minister, he further cautioned Pakenham.

Dudley, as well as Pakenham, had overstimated Poinsett's influence and authority in Mexico. Poinsett's star was already on the decline. Not only had he become the object of bitter denunciation by the conservatives, but even the Yorkinos had begun to desert him. This latter fact was due to a split in the Yorkino party.[51] It also had been responsible for the election of Gómez Pedraza, an earstwhile monarchist and Scottish Rite mason. No sooner had Pakenham congratulated himself and his chief on the brilliant prospects of an administration according to a British heart, when Pedraza was in full flight for his life.

After Guerrero's effective military demonstration had brought about his election, Pakenham could only ruefully accuse his perfidious colleague, "Mr. Poinsett has carried his point", he wrote Dudley, "but the triumph is a melancholy one, and it is difficult to conceive what advantage the United States, as a commercial nation, can possibly derive from the confusion in which his intrigues have involved the Country". The conservatives rightly enough accused Poinsett of having aided, if not brought about, the Guerrero land-slide.[52]

Under these circumstances Guerrero, in order to give his coup d'état a native complexion and the appearance of a spontaneous outburst of the will of the people, turned against Poinsett and washed his hands clean of any possible foreign taint. He felt, he told Pakenham, "the discredit brought upon his Government" by the prevailing idea that he was "acting under the influence of the Agent of a Foreign Power", and expressed the intention of demanding Poin-

[51] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, ch. 10.

[52] Poinsett's Letters to Johnson on Aug. 15 and Nov. 9, 1827, Gilpin Collection. RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 298.

sett's recall.[53] Accordingly, July 1, 1829, Guerrero wrote President Jackson a letter requesting that Poinsett be dismissed. "The public clamor against Mr. Poinsett has become general", said Guerrero, "not only among the authorities, and men of education, but also among the vulgar classes; not only among the individuals who suspected him, but also among many of those who have been his friends".[54] On Christmas Day, 1829, Poinsett took his formal leave of the president whose party he had helped to bring into power.[55]

Soon after Poinsett's departure United States diplomatic prestige in Mexico reached its nadir. Butler's appointment only reflected the depth to which it had sunk. Van Buren approached the British ambassador in Washington and asked for his good offices to reinstate the United States in the graces of Mexico. He told Mr. Vaughan that "Poinsett's conduct was not approved" and expressed the hope that Britain's "ascendency" might be used to dissolve Mexican hostility towards the United States.[56]

Poinsett's recall signalized British diplomatic victory over the United States in Mexico. However it casts no reflection upon Poinsett's ability as a diplomat to carry out his mission. Neither does it cast any glory upon Ward nor Pakenham, both of whom were inferior to Poinsett in the knowledge of Mexico. Therefore, we must seek the causes of the defeat of the United States and the victory of Great Britain elsewhere. And these, as it seems to us, we shall find in Washington and in London respectively. And the responsible agents are no others than John Quincy Adams and George Canning.

[53] *Ibid.*, RIPPY, p. 299.

[54] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 369.

[55] Poinsett's Address before the Mexican Legislature, Aug. 7, 1829; also his letter to Johnson, Sept. 24, 1828; likewise his letter to Martin Van Buren, secretary of state, March 10, 1829.

[56] RIPPY, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain*, p. 301.

At least as far as foreign affairs were concerned, Adams really spoke for two administrations, that of Monroe and his own. It is therefore solely to him that we must ascribe the causes of the diplomatic defeat that the United States suffered in Mexico. In the first place, it was he who refused to cooperate with Canning in a joint declaration against a policy of encroachments.[57] The proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine did not remedy the situation. Mexico had already grown suspicious of the ulterior motives of her neighbour. In the second place, his interpretation of the doctrine stripped it of all its immediate usefulness to Mexico as far as a possible French or Spanish invasion was concerned. Adams through Henry Clay expressed only the hope that such a danger was too remote from any immediate possibility.[58] On May 23, 1826, the president of Mexico told the assembly that the "Memorable promise of President Monroe . . . is disclaimed by the present government of the United States".[59] In the third place, Adams's failure to send a representative immediately after the recognition worked strongly against a sympathetic understanding between the two countries.

Many other factors, such as the questions of slavery, boundary, etc., entered into the unfavourable balance against the United States. But once the major premises had been more satisfactorily adjusted, these as well as other minor matters would have lent themselves quite readily to the process of arbitration.

Contrast with these drawbacks the favourable auspices under which the British initiated their diplomatic invasion. In the first place, Canning had invited the world at large and the United States in particular to a commitment to a

[57] MANNING, *Early Diplomatic Relations*, p. 61.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 62. TEMPERLEY, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, p. 166.
[59] TEMPERLEY, p. 167.

policy of non-encroachments upon Latin American soil.[60] Whether or not this magnanimous gesture carried any deep ulterior convictions behind it, was of no immediate importance, as it "went over big" with the Mexicans. In the second place, Canning, in failing to receive a very hearty applause from the European powers in general and from the United States in particular upon his announcement of a policy of non-intervention, instructed his commission to Mexico to assure that government that Great Britain neither desired any portion for herself of Spain's former colonies nor would she allow them to fall "under the dominion of any other power". With this straight-forward policy of Canning, Adams's hesitations and evasions contrasted very unfavourably against a Latin American background. In reality, however, Canning had no intention to do for Mexico any more than Adams could have conscienciously promised. Writing to Lionel Hervey, in 1824, Canning advised him not to lead the Mexicans to rely upon England's assistance against Spain. "We cannot give it, and Mexico, if they play their game properly, will not want it".[61] In the case of France, of course, it might have been a different matter, although on this particular occasion he did not say so. And lastly, British agents were there on the spot the minute independence movement was in the offing and they stayed there till full recognition was accorded in January 1825.

Considering these differences in policies and diplomatic procedure one can hardly wonder at the outcome. Poinsett's "meddlings" and "intrigues", or Ward's "aggressiveness" and lavish expenditures, fade almost into insignificance. Had Poinsett not allied himself with the Yorkinos and the Opposition in general, the United States would have hardly

[60] SALIT, *loc. et op. cit.*

[61] J. BAGOT: *George Canning and his Friends*, vol. II, p. 237. (London, 1909).

been heard of. When Poinsett arrived in Mexico, John Quincy Adams's policy had already insured his defeat and made certain Ward's victory.

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