

Comandante General
de la Alta California

Tengo el honor de acompañar a V.S. copias de
del 1. al 3 de las contestaciones habidas entre
el Comodoro de las fuerzas navales de los Esta-
dos Unidos y la Comandancia General de
mi cargo, a fin de que V.S. se imponga de la
conducta que he observado en medio de las
dificiles circunstancias en que me encuentro
y como no sea difícil, que en caso de un arribo
de la guerra u interdi manciellar mi reputa-
cion, que conservare ilibada a todo trance, su-
plica a V.S. no dignen tener estos documentos co-
mo prueba autentica de mi comportamiento
y si de ponerlos, si fueran necesarios en cono-
cimiento de la Nacion que tan dignamen-
te representa

Con tal motivo tengo el honor de
reproducir a V.S. las protestas de mi dis-
tinguido aprecio y atenta consideracion

D. V.S.

y Salud. Campo de la Mora Agosto 9 de 1845

José Castro

Don José Comandante de S. M. B.
Don Diego Forbes

Quarterly of the California Historical Society

THE BRITISH VICE CONSUL IN CALIFORNIA AND THE EVENTS OF 1846

James Alexander Forbes, a native of Scotland, came to California in 1831; he had been wrecked in the South Seas and was rescued and brought to the coast by the whaler *Fanny*. He then became a clerk for Padre Viader at Santa Clara, and in July 1834 married Ana, a daughter of Juan C. Galindo. He was appointed British Vice Consul in 1842, assuming office in October 1843. He died in Oakland in 1881, aged 77 years.

In the stirring events of 1846, Mr. Forbes was the sole British representative on the Pacific Coast north of Mazatlan. On account of his marriage he was in close touch with the Californian leaders; who, as is always the case under such conditions, placed in him their fullest confidence.

There recently appeared in the Californiana collections of two collectors, Mr. Frederick C. Clift of San Francisco, and Mr. W. Parker Lyon of Pasadena, a number of documents, nearly all in Spanish, which were originally in a pasteboard carton and which had been in Mr. Forbes' possession ever since 1846. The writer first saw Mr. Lyon's items, and at once became interested as he saw that they contained original letters from the Californian leaders, General José Castro, Governor Pio Pico, and Sub-Prefect Francisco Guerrero. A careful study shows that they were of no little importance, as they shed light upon the events of the year 1846, in which year all but one are dated, the exception being a copy of the "Convenio" of San Fernando of 1845.

While our list of these documents, now for the first time brought to light, is not quite complete, it is fortunately widespread enough to give us information upon all the important events of that year, up to and including Castro's proclamation on leaving the country, and the Sanchez revolt shortly thereafter. The events to which the correspondence relates are chronologically as follows:

1. Frémont's hoisting of the United States Flag on the Gavilan Peak, March 6, 1846.
2. The Bear Flag insurrection, June 14, and incidents relating thereto.
3. Commodore Sloat's proclamation of July 6.
4. Correspondence between Governor Pio Pico, Vice Consul Forbes and Rear Admiral Seymour, June 23 to July 29.
5. The taking of Los Angeles by Stockton in August.

* EDITOR'S NOTE: The Publication Committee is gratified to publish this article with the accompanying newly-discovered documents. The Committee, however, disclaims responsibility for the opinions expressed by the writer, and will welcome further contributions to clear up the important matters herein discussed.

6. General Castro's proclamation on leaving the country, August 9.

7. The revolt of Francisco Sanchez, December 1846 and January 1847.

This correspondence is of much historic value, because it proves three important facts in the history of California now for the first time brought to light, *i.e.*:

First: That the Californian leaders were filing with Vice Consul Forbes carefully certified and translated documents covering all the principal events, with the design and intent of ultimately requesting the intervention of Great Britain, when the time should seem desirable.

Second: That Governor Pio Pico did request intervention by Great Britain to arrest the American attack, and did request Great Britain to take California under her protection.

Third: That the Sanchez revolt, never clearly understood by Bancroft or other historians, was not, as stated, an isolated outbreak due to Americans stealing cattle, but was the northern end of a universal Californian revolt against the Americans, thwarted, however, by the failure of the inhabitants of the central portion, Monterey, to join in.

These documents are of two classes. Those that were either original letters addressed to Mr. Forbes, or were copies of proclamations; and those that were documents which Mr. Forbes had entered upon what we may term his "blotter" (sixteen pages of large blue foolscap), upon which he copied documents in his own handwriting, the originals doubtless being forwarded to his government. This method was adopted by him to preserve a complete file.

The complete list of these documents, as well as their present ownership, in chronological order, is as follows:

1. Lyon Collection: Copy of the "convenio" at San Fernando, February 22, 1845, certified to by Juan Bandini. Endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Copy convenio at San Fernando."
2. Lyon Collection: Original letter of Francisco Guerrero dated San Francisco, March 11, 1846, addressed to the Vice Consul of Her Britannic Majesty, Don Diego A. Forbes. Endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Official from Sub-Prefect relative to Fremont Mar 11 1846."
3. Lyon Collection: Copy from "blotter" of Vice Consul Forbes. Despatch of Thomas O. Larkin, U. S. Vice Consul, dated March 6, 1846, to Don Manuel Diaz, Alcalde of Monterey.
4. Lyon Collection: From Forbes' "blotter." Copy of Frémont's note to Larkin, which accompanied No. 3 and was also sent to Alcalde Diaz. Undated.
5. Lyon Collection: Original letter of General José Castro, which enclosed Nos. 3 and 4, to Vice Consul Forbes. Undated.
6. Lyon Collection: Proclamation of General José Castro, concerning Frémont, dated San Juan Bautista, March 13, 1846. Certified to by Pio Pico as a correct copy and sent to Forbes. Endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Jose Castro's Proclamation relative to Fremont."

7. Lyon Collection: From Forbes' "blotter." Copy of letter of General Castro dated Santa Clara, June 17, 1846, to Commander of the American Corvette of War *Portsmouth*.
- 8 and 9. Lyon Collection: From Forbes' "blotter." Copy of letter from Captain J. B. Montgomery of the *Portsmouth*, dated June 18, addressed to General José Castro at Santa Clara.
10. Lyon Collection: Copy of Ide's "Bear Flag" proclamation, translated by W. E. Hartnell, certified to by José Matias Moreno, and bearing a crude sketch of the Bear Flag with colors indicated. This accompanied No. 12 and was endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Proclamation of Hyde and the Official Notice of Same."
11. Clift Collection: Copy of Commodore Sloat's proclamation of July 6, 1846 (in English), endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Commodore Sloat's Proclamation."
12. Clift Collection: Original letter of Governor Pio Pico, dated Santa Barbara June 29, 1846, to "Vice Consul S. B. M. Don Diego A. Forbes," accompanied by No. 10.
13. Lyon Collection: Original letter of Governor Pio Pico, dated "Angeles July 29, 1846," addressed to "Diego Alex^o Forbes, Vice Consul of Her Britannic Majesty in California." Endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Official from Pio Pico acknowledging receipt of R. Admiral Seymour's despatch of the 23 July 46, 29th July."
14. Lyon Collection: Original letter of General Castro, dated "Camp on the Mesa Aug. 9, 1846," addressed to "Vice Consul de S. M. B. Don Diego Forbes," and endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Jose Castro with copies of correspondence Agosto 9 1846."
15. Lyon Collection: Copy in Spanish of Admiral Stockton's letter of August 7, 1846, addressed to the Comandante General of Alta California, signed with José Castro's original signature (to certify genuineness) and endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Copy of Com Stocktons letter to Gen Castro St Pedro Aug 7 46."
16. Clift Collection: Copy of despatch of General José Castro, dated Camp on the Mesa Aug 9 1846, to the "Commodore of the Naval Forces of the U. S. A. in the Pacific." Signed with José Castro's original signature to guarantee genuineness.
17. Lyon Collection: "Copy of Castro's proclamation on leaving the country, dated "Camp on the Mesa" Aug 9 1846, signed with Castro's original signature to certify genuineness, and endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Castro's Proclamation to his Countrymen on leaving for Sonora."
18. Clift Collection: Dated Santa Clara, Jan. 7, 1847, despatch containing portion or all of letter, headed "Frigate of the U. S. Savannah Yerba Buena Jan. 5 1847," and endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Extract of Orders from Capt Mervine to Capt Marston relative to capitulation."

19. Lyon Collection: Document in handwriting of Vice Consul Forbes, marked "Duplicate No 1" and endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Copy Jas Alex Forbes relative to fight at Santa Clara."

Several of these despatches, all of which are in Spanish, have been published in English in this *Quarterly*, and to save space will be omitted here, except when they are required for comment. But they are all valuable in this connection, as evidencing how completely the Californian leaders were filing everything of importance with Vice Consul Forbes.

We will now take them up in order and comment upon them.

No. 1. "Convenio" at San Fernando. This was printed in Bancroft's *History of California*, Vol. IV, page 509, and is therefore not here reproduced.

No. 2. This original letter of Francisco Guerrero, Sub-Prefect of the Second District, is addressed to Forbes and has never been published. We, therefore, give the translation and a reproduction of this interesting despatch. It is endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Official from Sub-Prefect relative to Frémont Mar 11 1846."

No. 2

Sub Prefecture
of the 2d District.

I have on this date received from the Prefecture an official letter in which I am informed of the following facts. The laws and integrity of the country are violated by the Captain of the Army of the United States, Don J. C. Fremont, with an armed force. Therefore it has been demanded by the Prefecture and the Commanding General, that he withdraw from the limits of the Department. He has disobeyed this and has placed his force in a hostile position, also hoisting the flag of his nation on a peak of the Sierra Gavilan, seeking to exercise arbitrarily a dominion over all the pueblos of the District.

In such circumstances as surround us, I have believed it my duty to place them in your knowledge, and pointing out the importance of your exerting your authority, to the end which concerns you; so that as Vice-Consul of Her Britannic Majesty you may cooperate to repress and avoid as far as possible that any of the subjects of Her Majesty may interfere against the cause of the country and the Mexican Nation, and meanwhile, that the business may be decided or terminated in whatever manner it may be deemed fitting by the Government.

Remaining then assured of your efficient cooperation as above indicated, I take the opportunity of reiterating my consideration and respect.

God and Liberty! San Francisco, March 11, 1846.

FRANCISCO GUERRERO
[Rubric]

To the Vice-Consul of Her Britannic Majesty
Don Diego A. Forbes

This letter is of interest, as it shows that Guerrero was keeping the British Vice Consul in touch with all the incidents that had occurred with regard to Frémont, and was requesting his cooperation to prevent any of his nationals from interfering against the government. This was hardly necessary, as no British subject, as far as we know, had any idea of favoring American pretensions, but much to the contrary.

Nos. 3, 4 and 5. From Forbes' "blotter."

Despatch No. 4 has been printed in this *Quarterly* (Vol. III, page 282), but since it, together with No. 3, accompanied Castro's interesting letter to Vice Consul Forbes, which is No. 5, in order to get the sequence of events and the full

significance of this procedure of filing with the British Vice Consul, these despatches are all reproduced here. We therefore commence with Larkin's despatch to Don Manuel Diaz which appears first in the "blotter" and follow with Frémont's despatch to Larkin and Larkin's following despatch to Don Manuel Diaz which accompanied it. These despatches are all in Spanish on Forbes' "blotter." The English translations follow.

No. 3

Consulate of the United States
Monterey, March 6, 1846

Sir:—

I do not know whether Captain Fremont will approve my giving you a translation of the letter which he wrote with so much haste. But, as you permitted my letter to go to the country and his to return here, in the hope that said letter can lead to a settlement of the business I send the translation that you asked me for. You know that the authorities of the Department keep everything from me, as the Consul of the United States in the actual state of affairs. I do not observe, I do not know, what I can do. I have offered my services when they judge them necessary. I now turn to offer them to you in writing. Captain Fremont has his own instructions, and is not subject to this consulate. Nevertheless I will with pleasure mitigate the actual feeling, if I can. I can only respectfully request that when you see the General today, tell him that I take the liberty of proposing that he send a letter to Captain Fremont, requesting a conversation of an hour before proceeding to take any strong measures; for it is my firm opinion that if he attacks this officer, he will have much blood shed which can cause not only the loss of lives, of those who are actually engaged on one side or the other, but also much expense and work and probably more deaths, among many of the citizens of both nations, and I am satisfied that no advantage, either present or future, will be secured for the country, under the aspect which the actual circumstances present.

I have reasons for believing that Captain Fremont only desires a few days to rest his horses (having already bought his provisions), and that he expects to leave California immediately. But he won't be able to do so, should he encounter a body of men with hostile intent to him. I will appreciate it if you will send a copy of this to the Comandante General Don Jose Castro.

I have the honor to be,

THOMAS O. LARKIN

Señor Alcalde of Monterey,
Don Manuel Diaz.

I certify that this is a true copy of the original.
GUILLERMO E. HARTNELL.

This is a copy.

MANUEL DIAZ

The date of Larkin's note is March 6, 1846. It was translated into Spanish by William E. Hartnell, who was the official translator for the local government officials. Manuel Diaz certifies that it is a copy. (A contemporary English translation of the above letter, slightly differing in language and dated March 10, 1846, was printed in this *Quarterly*, Vol. III, pp. 286-87, from the Sloat Documents in the Templeton Crocker Collection.)

No. 4

My dear Sir:

[March 9, 1846]

At this moment I have just received the letters from you; and without waiting to read them, I acknowledge their receipt as the courier returns immediately.

I am fortifying myself as well as possible with the intention that, if we are attacked unjustly, we will fight to the last extremity without giving way, in the confidence that our country will avenge our death. No one has arrived at my camp and from the heights we can see with the glasses a troop that is being assembled in San Juan and preparing cannons. I am much obliged to you for your kindness and good wishes, and would have written more fully with respect to my intentions, if I were not afraid that the letter would be intercepted.

We have done no injury to the people or to the authorities of the country; and if they surround and assault us, here we will die to the last man under the flag of our country.

Very truly yours,

J. C. FREMONT.

P. S. I am camped on the crest of the Sierra on the headwaters of a stream which leads off the road from Monterey near the house of Don Joaquin Gomez.

I certify that this is a true translation of the original.

WILLIAM E. HARTNELL.

That which precedes is a translation of a letter written by Captain Fremont, which I received last night at 8 o'clock, and I have permitted its translation at the request of Don Manuel Diaz, Alcalde of Monterey (he having yesterday given a passport to our courier to go to the camp and return), in the hope that I can mitigate the existing feeling, and that matters may adjust themselves, and also that the authorities may not believe that I have any unlawful correspondence with Captain Fremont.

Consulate of the United States of North America, Monterey, March 10, 1846

THOMAS O. LARKIN

This is a copy of the original.

MANUEL DIAZ.

Frémont's note is undated, but the footnote of the accompanying note to Diaz from the Consulate of the United States at Monterey is dated March 10, and Diaz certifies to the copies of both.

There now appears on the Forbes blotter a copy of a letter of Castro's which I consider of value as showing the intimate relations between him and the British Vice Consul. It enclosed to Forbes the foregoing important letter of Larkin with the letter of Frémont, both carefully translated into Spanish by the official translator. It is therefore particularly noteworthy as showing the close relationship and the fullness of General Castro's filing of all documents of importance, carefully translated into Spanish by the official translator, with the British Vice Consul.

From the fact that the originals of these letters were not found in the carton which contained these documents, it is quite probable that Vice Consul Forbes wrote these copies on his blotter, forwarding the originals to the higher representatives of his government, and thus providing himself with his own record. The translation follows:

No. 5

My very dear friend:

Three days since Captain Fremont abandoned his ridiculous fortification, making his retreat in a complete withdrawal, taking the road to the Tulares, leaving in perpetual memory of his heroism the hoisting of the flag of his country on the highest part of the Sierra Gavilan, where he unfurled the flag of the United States.

I accompany herewith to you copies of a letter which this shameless American wrote to the consul of his nation in Monterey. Today I have dispersed all the citizens who are united here; they went back to their work and I have remained here with a force of thirty men, in case there may be any more of this mutinous business of the Gavilan.

I am your friend and servant, I kiss your hand

JOSE CASTRO.

No. 6. The next despatch is the proclamation of General Castro concerning Frémont. It has been published in Bancroft (Vol. V, p. 19) and in this *Quarterly* (Vol. IV, p. 384-5) and it is not necessary to reproduce it here.

No. 7. This despatch is also from Forbes' "blotter." It is dated at Santa Clara and addressed to the Commander of the American Corvette *Portsmouth* at Sausalito. The translation follows:

No. 7

General Headquarters of Upper California.

The undersigned Commanding General of the Department has the honor to direct himself to you, asking declarations concerning the observed conduct of Captain Fremont, who, without the established formalities between civilized nations, invades this country, rupturing national and personal interests, taking possession of the plaza of Sonoma, taking prisoners Colonel Don Mariano G. Vallejo, Lieutenant Colonel Don Victor Prudon, Captain Don Salvador Vallejo, and Don Jacob Leese. These scandalous events compel me to hope for an answer from you with the certainty that he who signs below will view with pleasure whatever your answer may be.

God and Liberty! General Headquarters Santa Clara, June 17th, 1846.

JOSÉ CASTRO.

To the Commander of the American Corvette of War, "Portsmouth," Harbor of San Francisco.

(Lieut. Washington Bartlett's translation of the above despatch was printed in this *Quarterly*, Vol. II, p. 69.)

Castro was watching Frémont very closely at Sonoma. As Ide only formulated his proclamation and took his prisoners on the 14th of June, Castro at once wrote the Commander of the American forces in the district, *the day before the actual issuance of the Bear Flag proclamation*, Castro's despatch being dated Santa Clara June 17th, and the date of the Bear Flag proclamation being June 18th. As the despatch was dated at Santa Clara, the residence of Vice-Consul Forbes, it might easily have been that it was written after consultation with the British Vice Consul, for Castro's headquarters were at San Juan Bautista. It certainly was a clever move on Castro's part. He did not even know Montgomery's name and therefore addressed his despatch to the "Commander of the American Corvette of War Portsmouth." Certainly he lost no time in getting the facts before the British Vice Consul, who at once entered the despatch on his "blotter."

Nos. 8 and 9. From Forbes' "blotter." Although printed in this *Quarterly*, (Vol. II, pp. 69-71) this despatch is reproduced here because of slight differences that exist between it and the American version, and also because it is necessary for comment in the sequence of these despatches. The American version curiously omits a short paragraph: "The Alcalde of the same place continued in employment of his office is the honorable testimony to this proof." Forbes on the other hand also omits a few lines. It is curious that on the blotter our No. 8 immediately follows No. 7, Castro's despatch to the Commander of the *Portsmouth*, and No. 9 follows No. 8. But on comparison with the American version, they would seem to be parts of the same translated American despatch, and it is quite evident that No. 8 is the concluding part, instead of No. 9. The translations follow:

No. 8

The undersigned Commander of the Frigate "Portsmouth" of the United States, with due respect to the high attention of General Jose Castro, requests and insists that under the circumstances related it is necessary to take into consideration the belligerent demonstration made against the scientific party of Captain Fremont, which in last March was entirely voluntary on the part of General Castro, having no necessity,

obligation, or expediency, for its justification; and furthermore, the same Commander declares that he is entirely without knowledge or information in what manner the Commanding General of California maintains the impossible assumption of the cooperation of an official of the United States Navy in the recent transaction at Sonoma, by this means impugning the integrity of the Government of the United States.

The undersigned concludes, resenting the supposition that Don Jose Castro could possibly have intended the imputation named in the preceding paragraph, and greatly regrets that the tenor of the communication of General Don Jose Castro of yesterday, to which this is an answer, was not limited solely to the simple interrogation with regard to the position of Captain Fremont in the Department, without resorting to the calumnious imputation so lightly conferred by the Commanding General of Alta California upon an official of the United States.

J. B. MONTGOMERY.

To General Jose Castro,
Commander of the Forces of Alta California,
At Santa Clara.
Received on the 18th June.

No. 9

Corvette of War of the United States "Portsmouth"
Anchored in Sausalito, June 18th, 1846.

The undersigned Commander of the United States Frigate "Portsmouth" has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the note of General Jose Castro, dated yesterday, and in reply assures General Castro his entire conviction that the visit of Captain J. C. Fremont, topographical engineer, has reference to scientific observations and that he is in no way permitted by the government of the United States to have any connection with the political upheaval of this country at Sonoma. The undersigned takes pleasure in communicating to the Commanding General, that at the instance of General Mariano Vallejo, by his messenger Don Jose de la Rosa, an official of the Frigate "Portsmouth" was despatched promptly to make protests to the Chief who is in possession of Sonoma, in favor of the families of the officials who are prisoners, with a view to their protection; and having examined their persons, properties, and privileges, I take pleasure in informing General Castro, that on the arrival of the officials of the vessel at Sonoma, far from the anarchy and disorder which General Mariano G. Vallejo understood was the case he found the most perfect order and quiet prevailing in the place, and that in every instance there had been on their part by the direction of the capturers, a delicate veneration and attention concerning the happiness and protection of all.

The Alcalde of the same place continued in employment in his own office, is the honorable testimony to this truth.

The undersigned finds it necessary to improve the opportunity which presents itself to express to General Castro his sincere surprise that with the facilities of obtaining correct information of the incidents transpiring within his department, and under his observation, he should the second time have fallen into an error with respect to the designs and operations of a scientific party, whose arrival in the vicinity had been preceded by a visit and explanation to General Castro, and the authorities of Monterey.

Evidently Castro's despatch found Montgomery in a rather awkward position. He had much to explain, and did not know how to explain it. He retorted strongly concerning Castro's threats to Frémont in March which led to the Gavilan affair. All this information Montgomery had doubtless received from Larkin who, of course, was thoroughly conversant with that entire incident. And that was about all he had to offer in reply to Castro's disconcerting and pointed despatch.

In connection with this despatch of Montgomery's to Castro, evidently much stress and vehement declaration was being made to the effect that Frémont was not concerned in the Bear Flag affair at Sonoma. The second document relates that an officer had been sent to Sonoma at Vallejo's request, to ascertain

whether any of his family or possessions were being violated. Just how much Frémont had to do with inspiring the Bear Flag revolution we will probably never know. I am strongly of the opinion that he inspired it, but did not desire the fact known. What verbal message Gillespie brought to Frémont near Klamath, which caused him to turn south, will also never be known. But at least there was sufficient to cause him to abandon his trip to Oregon, turn south on the 8th of May, and take the course which he did with regard to the "Bear Flag" uprising, which he immediately thereafter joined, *all the denials of the U. S. Naval officers to the contrary notwithstanding*. I am of the opinion that Gillespie brought word of the fact that war would take place between the United States and Mexico, although war had not yet been formally declared; that the United States would eventually declare war against Mexico; that Frémont was to see that California was taken for the United States, but to keep his hand covered as much as possible, until war was actually declared, and that the Naval forces were instructed to assist him to the fullest extent. This would be only a reasonable and wise precaution. As a matter of fact, a state of war was declared to exist between the United States and Mexico on the 11th of May, about one month before the Sonoma uprising. But no one knew it for a certainty until the U. S. S. *Warren* arrived with despatches for Stockton at Monterey on the 12th of August, which despatches Stockton received on the 17th of that month at Los Angeles when the first messenger reached him.

The government knew Frémont and his iron nerve; its officials knew they could trust him to carry out any instruction to the letter, but they did not want him to show his hand until war was actually declared, or unless it became necessary, is my firm conviction.

Bancroft's idea of Frémont's reasons for turning south from Klamath displays his utter lack of judgment in interpreting these historical facts. He believes that Frémont was actually turned from proceeding into Oregon by deep snow. As the date was May 8, to any one who knows the Coast as Bancroft did, such reasoning was little short of absurd, particularly when we take into consideration Frémont's well known proclivity for going anywhere at any time. In Bancroft's footnote (Vol. V, p. 28, n. 54), he states: "April 25, Leidesdorff to Larkin. Gillespie to start in a few hours. Glorious news for Frémont! I think I can see him smile. By your letters it appears that the news is not generally known; however, they must have had some news, as the Sub-Prefect is busy dispatching couriers. . . ."

What news? Leidesdorff and Larkin must have had the news from Gillespie that Frémont was to act and that hostilities had begun, for they also suspected that the Sub-Prefect had "some news" and was dispatching couriers. And in the face of this very footnote Bancroft believed that after Gillespie met Frémont they turned back on account of heavy snow! Of such unfortunate judgment is this historian where Frémont is concerned.

As to Montgomery in command of the *Portsmouth*, he had not yet personally met Frémont on the 18th of June. But a careful study of the despatches known

as the "Sloat Correspondence" in the Society's possession shows that, while yet personally unknown to each other, Frémont and Montgomery were engaged in a lively correspondence that leaves little doubt in the mind of a careful reader that they had full cognizance of the parts that they were individually to play. On June 3, Montgomery had written a long letter to Frémont, replete with cautious phrases of what may be termed the "cover-up" variety. Although this despatch has been printed in this *Quarterly* (Vol. VI, p. 265), and in Frémont's *Memoirs* (p. 518), it is so significant in connection with the important events of the Conquest that it is reproduced in full here.

U. S. Ship Portsmouth,
Bay of San Francisco,
June 3d, 1846.

Sir:

On the 31st ulto. the day previous to my sailing from Monterey a courier from Lieut. Gillespie to the U. States Consul arrived bringing the only definite intelligence of your movements & position since my arrival at that port on the 22d of April last. The instructions under which I am now serving & which may detain me until late in the fall, or longer upon this coast, have relation specifically to the objects of affording protection to the persons & property of Citizens of the U. States & of maintaining a watchful care over the General interests of our Country, Without reference in any manner to the enterprise in which you are so actively engaged; the nature & subject of which, except, so far as I may have been rightly informed by paragraphs casually met with in public prints I am totally ignorant.

I beg leave however, (availing myself of the return of the Messenger) to assure you Sir of the interest I feel in the successful prosecution & Issue of the public interests committed to your direction, and without desiring information further than you may deem necessary, to enable me to aid & facilitate your operations, to express my sincere desire & readiness to serve you in any manner consistent with other duties.

Permit me to say Sir that if you should find it convenient to visit the U. S. Ship Portsmouth during her stay in this port, that I with the officers of the Ship — will be most happy to see you.

I shall remain here probably three weeks unless unforeseen circumstances requiring an earlier movement & my present intention is to return to Monterey.

I am Sir Very Respecy.

Jno. B. MONTGOMERY

Commander
U. S. N.

To
Capt. J. C. Fremont
Upper California

On June 9, Gillespie addressed a letter to Montgomery, requisitioning supplies and money for Frémont. He wanted \$1500.00 with which to buy horses, Frémont's being worn out and in no condition to leave on the trip to the States! The first part of the requisition was of a military nature, lead, powder and 8,000 caps, also five barrels of flour, etc., etc. And the Bear Flag revolt was only six days away!

On June 10, Montgomery sent Frémont the following significant despatch. Again it is necessary to read a little between the lines. (Mr. Templeton Crocker's Sloat Manuscripts, printed in this *Quarterly* Vol. VI, p. 268, also printed in Frémont's *Memoirs*, p. 519.)

U. S. Ship Portsmouth
Bay of San Francisco
June 10t. 1846

Sir

Since writing you by Neal on the 3d. Inst. I have been by Lieut. Gillespie informed of your present position and circumstances and made acquainted with your design soon to proceed South with your party as far as Santa Barbara before striking

across the country for the U. States. I am also informed by Lieut. G. of your having expressed to him a desire for the presence of a vessel of war at Santa Barbara, during the period of your temporary sojourn in the vicinity of that port.

Now Sir I am happy to say that I feel myself at liberty to visit any or all ports upon this coast should the public interests require it & if on receipt of this you shall still think that the presence of a Ship of War at Santa Barbara may prove serviceable to you in carrying out the views of our Government & will do me the favor by the return boat to communicate your wishes with information as to the time you will probably reach that part of the coast I will not fail (providence permitting) to meet you there with the Portsmouth.

I feel Gratified Sir in having it in my power to forward you by Lt. Hunter the amt. of funds asked for in your name by Lieut. Gillespie with most of the articles of Stores &c. required to meet the demand of your urgent necessity regretting only, my inability to furnish the whole. You will oblige me by signing the Requisitions & Receipts annexed to the several invoices transmitted by Lt. Hunter, & with a view to the settlement of Purser James H. Watmough's accts. at the Navy Department, be pleased to give an order or bill (in duplicate) on the proper Dept. of Government, payable to Purser Watmough's order to the 4t. Auditor of the Treasury for the aggregate amt. of money & Pursers Stores Supplied.

Articles having no prices affixed need only to be receipted for.

Lieut. Gillespie informs me that you may find it convenient to visit the Portsmouth at Santa Barbara should we have occasion to go there. With this prospect in view I beg leave again to assure you that we shall all on board be most happy to see you.

Very Respectfully

I am Sir Your Ob't Servant

JNo B. MONTGOMERY

Commander U. S. N.

To

Capt. J. C. Fremont

Bt. Capt. U. S. Topl. Engineers

U. California

On the 16th Frémont wrote to Montgomery from New Helvetia as follows (Despatch printed in this *Quarterly* Vol. VI, p. 274):

I had the gratification to receive on the 6th, your letter of the 3d instant; and the further gratification to receive yesterday by the hands of Lieut. Hunter, your favor of the 10th, conveying to me assurances of your disposition to do anything within the scope of your instructions to facilitate the public service in which I am engaged. In acknowledging the receipt of the stores with which you have supplied us, I beg you to receive the earnest thanks of myself and party for the prompt and active kindness which we are all in a condition fully to appreciate. My time today has been so constantly engrossed that I could make no opportunity to write and as it is now nearly midnight you will permit me to refer you to Lieutenant Hunter for an account of the condition of the country, which will doubtless have much interest for you. The people here have made some movements with the view of establishing a settled and stable government which may give security to their persons and property. This evening I was interrupted in a note to yourself by the arrival of Genl Vallejo and other officers, who had been taken prisoners & insisted on surrendering to me. The people and authorities of the country persist in connecting me with every movement of the foreigners, & I am in hourly expectation of the approach of Genl. Castro.

My position has consequently become a difficult one. The unexpected hostility which has been exercised towards us on the part of the military authorities of California has entirely deranged the plan of our Survey & frustrated my intention of examining the Colorado of the Gulf of California, which was one of the principal objects of this expedition.

The suffering to which my party would be unavoidably exposed at this advanced period of the year by deprivation of water during intervals of three & four days, renders any movement in that direction impracticable.

It is therefore my present intention to abandon the farther prosecution of our exploration & proceed immediately across the mountainous country to the eastward in the direction of the head waters of the Arkansau river, & thence to the frontier of Missouri, where I expect to arrive early in September. In order to recruit my animals & arrange my equipage for a long journey, I shall necessarily be compelled to remain here untill about the first of July. In the mean time should any thing be attempted

against me, I cannot, consistently with my own feelings & respect for the National character of the duty in which I am engaged, permit a repetition of the recent insults we have received from Gen^l. Castro. If therefore any hostile movements are made in this direction I will most assuredly meet or anticipate them; and with such intentions I am regulating my conduct to the people here. The nature of my instructions & the peaceful nature of our operations, do not contemplate any active hostility on my part even in the event of war between the two countries; and therefore although I am resolved to take such active and precautionary measures as I shall judge necessary for our safety, I am not authorized to ask from you any other than such assistance, as without incurring yourself unusual responsibility, you would feel at liberty to afford me. Such an emergency could not have been anticipated in any instructions; but between indians on the one hand and a hostile people on the other, I trust that our Government will not severely censure any efforts to which we may be driven in defence of our lives & character. In this condition of things I can only then urgently request that you will remain with the Portsmouth in the Bay of San Francisco, where your presence will operate strongly to check proceedings against us; and I would feel much more security in my position should you judge it advisable to keep open a communication with me by means of your boats. In this way you would receive the earliest information, and you might possibly spare us the aid of one of your surgeons in case of accident here. Repeating my thanks for the assistance you have rendered us and regretting my inability to visit you on board the Portsmouth,

I am Sir, Very Respectfully

Your Ob^t. Serv^t.

J. C. FREMONT

Bt. Capt. U. S. Topl

Engineers U. S. Army

Capt. Jn^o B Montgomery
U. S. Ship Portsmouth
Bay of San Francisco
California

The Bear Flag revolt was even then in progress, and it is noticeable that in the first paragraph Frémont uses almost the same phrasing which Ide embodies in his proclamation of the 15th. The movement had started June 14th. And it was with all this news in his knowledge that Montgomery received Castro's pointed despatch of the 17th from Santa Clara.

With these facts clearly before us, we are led to inquire by what queer conversion of authority could a lieutenant of the Topographical Survey have the right to order the captain of a warship to meet him at Santa Barbara three hundred inconvenient miles away? Why should the commander of the warship, far outranking him, obey his slightest behest, conveyed orally by a third person? And why should Captain Montgomery, after stating that he is totally ignorant of the nature of Frémont's enterprise, in the next sentence express his sincere desire and readiness to aid and facilitate his operations? Furthermore why should Frémont, with his band of sixty-seven men who had traversed most fearlessly the wild continent, its pitiless deserts, and all existing hostile Indian tribes, have suddenly imbibed so much timidity that they should need a warship to come three hundred miles to see them start off on their journey to the United States?

This most significant despatch of Frémont's shows clearly how he was hiding his real intentions in a long flow of words. Possibly he was afraid that it would be intercepted. He says that he intended to abandon his explorations and proceed East. The nature of his instructions did not contemplate any hostility on his part even in the event of war. He did not want any assistance from Montgomery except what he would feel at liberty to afford. But, in his final paragraph he did

urgently request the *Portsmouth* to remain in the Bay of San Francisco. And he would feel much more secure should communication by boat be kept open. And possibly a surgeon could be spared in case of accident! Were not these last requests the real purports of his long letter?

Who was threatening Frémont in his security at Sutter's Fort? And why all this sudden necessity for surgeons, etc.? The sequence of events would seem to show what was in Frémont's mind. The Bear Flag revolt started June 14. He wrote this letter to Montgomery on the 16th. On the 23d he moved from Sutter's Fort to place himself at the head of the Sonoma revolt. On the 25th he arrived at Sonoma and headed the revolt. On the 28th fighting began and Frémont's forces killed three Californians.

Were not these letters all written by men working together to attain a common object, but keeping that knowledge well covered in case of interception of despatches, and particularly as their intention could not be revealed until war between Mexico and the United States had been actually declared?

Gillespie had evidently, under definite instructions, communicated the Government's plans and intentions as fully to the naval officers as he had to Frémont, and the result was close collaboration on the part of each. They knew that they were working quickly and in the face of danger from an outside force. But it is evident that Frémont was in supreme command until the arrival of Commodore Sloat and the fleet. And those instructions of Gillespie's even if never to this day made public, seem to the writer to be perfectly transparent from the course of the events which they induced.

As to Gillespie, when he left the East a state of war existed between Texas and Mexico. In April 1845, Congress accepted the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas. General Almonte, Mexican Minister, protested, demanded his passports, and left for Mexico.

June 4, 1845, President Herrera issued a proclamation declaring Texas Mexican property, and his determination to defend it by arms.

In July, 1845, General Zachary Taylor was ordered to Texas to take a position near the Rio Grande.

December 1, 1845, Texas was received into the Union. It was considered that war was a foregone conclusion. Gillespie left before this, but from what had already happened the Government doubtless knew that Texas would be admitted early in December. President Polk declared that a state of war existed, May 11, 1846. The Mexican Government declared war on May 23, 1846. As we have seen, the news of this declaration was not received on the Coast until August 12 at Monterey, and by Commodore Stockton on August 17. But were the Californian officials in the same ignorance? It is not likely. Communication between the United States and California was almost impossible; but speedy couriers could come from Sonora to Los Angeles in two or three weeks. It is probable, if not certain, that the Californians had knowledge of the declaration by the middle of June or thereabouts. This would account for the wording of Pio Pico's following despatch to Forbes of June 29, in which he states: "The undersigned

has not had *confirmed* news that there has been an open declaration of war with that power." Maybe not, but his language implies that he had knowledge of it, even if not yet an official confirmation.

No. 10. The Bear Flag Proclamation. This is introduced here for comment and because of the entirely different construction of the flag in the Californian version. It was translated into Spanish by William E. Hartnell, the official translator, and certified to by José Moreno, Pio Pico's secretary. The re-translation into English follows here. This certified copy of the Bear Flag proclamation in Spanish accompanied Pio Pico's letter of June 29 which is despatch No. 12 below. The Californian version of the proclamation follows:

No. 10

The Commander-in-chief of the troops assembled at the fortress of Sonoma, gives his inviolable pledge to all persons in California not found under arms, that they shall not be disturbed in their persons, their property, or social relations, one with another, by men under his command.

He also solemnly declares his object to be: First, to defend himself and companions in arms, who were invited to this country by a promise of lands on which to settle themselves and families; who were also promised a republican government; when having arrived in California, they were denied the privilege of buying or renting lands of their friends; who, instead of being allowed to participate in, or being protected by, a republican government, were oppressed by a military despotism; who were even threatened by proclamation, by the chief officers of the aforesaid despotism with extermination if they should not depart out of the country, leaving all their property, arms, and beasts of burden; and thus deprived of their means of flight or defense, were to be driven through deserts inhabited by hostile Indians to their certain destruction.

To overthrow a government which has seized upon the property of the Missions for its individual aggrandizement, which has ruined and shamefully oppressed the laboring people of California, by enormous exactions on goods imported into the country, is the determined purpose of the brave men who are associated under my command.

I also solmenly declare my object, in the second place, to be to invite all peaceable and good citizens of California who are friendly to the maintenance of good order and equal rights, and I do hereby invite them to repair to my camp at Sonoma, without delay, to assist us in establishing and perpetuating a republican government, which shall secure to all civil and religious liberty; which shall encourage virtue and literature; which shall leave unshackled by fetters, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures.

I further declare, that I rely upon the rectitude of our intentions, the favor of Heaven, and the bravery of those who are bound and associated with me, by the principles of self-preservation, by the love of truth, and the hatred of tyranny, for my hopes of success.

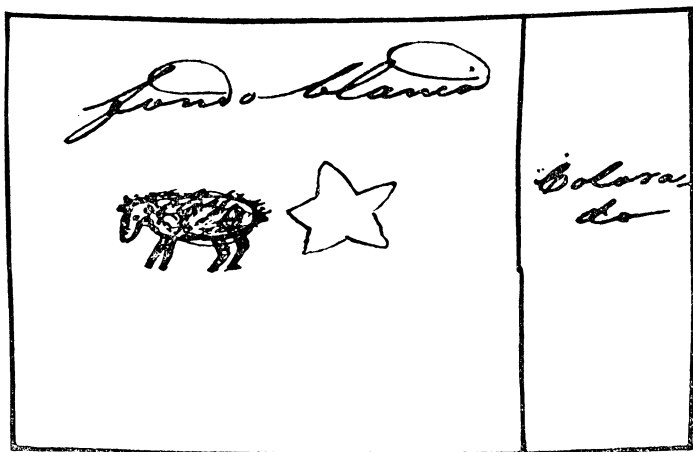
I furthermore declare that I believe that a government to be prosperous and happy, must originate with the people, who are friendly to its existence; that the citizens are its guardians, the officers, its servants, its glory, its reward.

WILLIAM B. IDE.

Headquarters, Sonoma, June 18, 1846.

This copy taken from the original translated by Mr. William Hartnell.

Banderas



This true copy was taken from the original letter which exists in the office in my charge and certified Santa Barbara, June 29, 1846.

JOSÉ MATIAS MORENO.

The original Proclamation, as drawn by Ide, was dated June 15, but I believe it was not issued on that date. His "Biographical Sketch" states that Lieutenant Missroon asked for a copy on the evening of the 17th and they had none. Also that Lieutenant Missroon read the proclamation to the garrison on the morning of the 18th, and that it was issued on that date. Thus the proclamation that the Californian officials copied and sent to Forbes was actually dated June 18, and I have given it as found on the copy sent to Forbes by them. Ide states that many of his men were fearful of issuing the proclamation, lest it might incriminate them, and that it was not actually issued until Lieutenant Missroon himself read it to the garrison, and returned and said "every man has approved the proclamation, and has sworn to sustain its principles."

In this connection the following queries suggest themselves. After Montgomery sent Missroon, at Vallejo's request, to see whether his family and property were protected, and after Missroon found everything quiet, why should Montgomery have sent him back the next day?

And on Missroon's arrival, why should he ask for a copy of the proclamation? Of which they had none!

And why, the next morning, after having a copy, should Missroon have read it to the garrison?

And why, having read it, should he have returned to Ide, and have said "Every man has approved it and has sworn to uphold its principles."

It seems perfectly clear that Frémont, Gillespie, Montgomery, and even their subordinates were working carefully together. Castro did not hesitate to state to Pio Pico that the Commander of the *Portsmouth* was assisting the revolt. To me it appears that the Bear Flag revolt, which started with such an onrush, cooled off when the participants realized their position and the possible consequences. And it required the fostering care of the warship, and even of its personnel, to bring the revolt to a successful termination by obtaining and reading the proclamation, which, written three days before, the revolvers had hesitated to issue and stand behind. What messages and support they were receiving from the nearby Frémont we can only imagine. But his presence, and without doubt his encouragement must also have been important factors in the ultimate result. And he was holding Vallejo and his associates in his custody at Sutter's Fort. How could the Sonoma Bear Flag revolvers fail to stand behind the proclamation, after it had been read to them by a lieutenant in the United States Navy? And with Frémont holding the Californian officers and leaders in custody?

In commenting upon the Californian sketch, now first reproduced, we note that the red stripe, which in the American version is attached longitudinally to the bottom of the flag, is vertical and next to the flagpole, where it naturally would be. This is clearly marked "Colorado" (red). Also the remainder of the flag is marked "fondo blanco" (white field). And also the awkward bear is facing the other way — away from instead of pointed toward the flagstaff. We do not care to venture any opinion as to which is correct, but the difference is noteworthy, particularly in the light of the divergence of the American opinions as to the details. It is noticeable, however, that it bears no letters: which confirms John Bidwell's statement as to that fact. Bancroft's account of the "Bear Flag" (Vol. V, p. 147 and footnotes) shows that there were just as many different versions as to the colors and the flag itself as there were accounts of it. The Californians were copying minutely, and certifying their copy to the British Vice Consul.

No. 11. Copied by Forbes and endorsed on the back in pencil: "Commodore Sloat's Proclamation." As this document has been frequently published, it will not be reprinted here.

No. 12. Letter addressed by Governor Pio Pico to Vice Consul Forbes, dated Santa Barbara, June 29, 1846.

No. 12

The undersigned, Constitutional Governor of the Department of the Californias, is sorry to inform Mr. Diego A. Forbes, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice Consul, that through the office of the Commander General of this Department and County Office of the Second District, he has been given the unpleasant news that a multitude of invaders from the United States of America have entered the northern part of this same Department, attacking four Mexican citizens, taking possession of the Sonoma garrison, and tearing the Mexican flag to pieces.

The undersigned has not had confirmed news that there has been an open declaration of war with that power; therefore, he resents strongly the audacious infamy perpetuated by the American foreigners, who, violating the sacred pacts and institutions of our Nation and ignoring all the gratitude which they should show for the hospitality they have received, in the most atrocious manner are trying to have this section of the Republic of Mexico present as sad a picture as the Department of Texas, practically consummating another great theft.

The undersigned has been informed that a great number of this kind of people

must have come under the protection of the first traitors who made the declaration of war in Sonoma. In the same manner the undersigned has been assured that an American war vessel, which is now anchored actually in Yerba Buena is secretly helping the invaders, this being the principal object of its being in that port.

The undersigned is considerably angered since he saw the translation of the proclamation, of which I respectfully enclose a copy, and in which the foreigner Guillermo [William] B. Ide, commander of that band of bandits, has addressed the inhabitants of this country describing in the most threatening and scandalous manner the abominable aspirations of the United States of America to its separation from the Union of Mexico.

The undersigned has the best intentions to repel the enemy and to keep intact liberty and independence, and is sure that all the Mexicans residing in this Department, in view of the sacred object, are filled with enthusiasm and are ready to sacrifice themselves and to have their blood flow rather than to surrender to a foreign domination. Therefore, he cannot do otherwise than to inform the Vice Consul of Her Britannic Majesty that even though his intention is to have a bloody encounter with them in order to punish the aggressors, the shores are unprotected and exposed to be occupied and blockaded by the American war vessels.

The undersigned is satisfied that Great Britain, being an ally of the Republic of Mexico and both nations having great consideration for each other, in view of such an outrage, will doubtless give her protection. This inspires the undersigned to solicit help in the name of the Mexican Departmental Government through that consulate, as there is on the coast a war corvette, in the hope that this will be enough to stop the progress of the ambitions of the Americans.

The undersigned feels that this step taken to save his country will be approved by the Supreme National Authority and, consequently, believes that this petition will be granted.

In addressing this note to Mr. Diego A. Forves, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice Consul, the undersigned requests that it will be given a quick solution and has the honor to offer him his high esteem and consideration.

God and Liberty, Santa Barbara, June 29, 1846, at 1 A. M.

PIO PICO.
[Rubric.]

Mr. Vice Consul of Her Britannic Majesty
Don Diego A. Forves

This, indeed, is the most interesting document of this entire group, one that was unknown to historians and has come to light only recently. It was accompanied by the copy of the Bear Flag Proclamation, certified to by Pio Pico's secretary, José Matias Moreno, herewith reprinted.

It was clear that the Californian chieftains had been filing their despatches and documents with Vice Consul Forbes in the hope that, by his passing them on to his government, his country would intervene in their behalf. But all doubts on that matter are set at rest with the reproduction here of the original despatch of Governor Pio Pico. It is most noteworthy that in this well-considered despatch Pio Pico states that the Commanding General has informed him of the Sonoma revolt, and the hauling down of the Mexican flag. It cleverly stands on the premise that no open declaration of war had been confirmed, although in fact Mexico had declared war on May 23, and from the curious wording of his phrase, and his superior facilities for information I conclude that Pio Pico probably knew it. He also recounts the assembling of a great number "under protection of the first traitors" and states that an American war vessel is secretly aiding them. Lieutenant Missroon's two visits had not passed unnoticed, and probably the part he played in having the proclamation issued publicly after three days' delay.

Pio Pico does not request, but actually states that, in view of the events carefully recorded with its Vice Consul, Great Britain will "doubtless give her protec-

tion." And he solicits help through the Consulate, as there was on the coast a British corvette, to stop the progress of the ambitions of the Americans. As a matter of fact, the British fleet was far more powerful than the American. Also he confidently believes that the step will be approved and his petition be granted. He could hardly have been so confident unless he had received assurances from someone at some time, that such a step, which might lead to war between the United States and Great Britain, would be taken. And he even requests quick action. This outstanding despatch, which throws such definite light on a hitherto unknown event in our national history, has come to light only within the past year. No previous historians writing on that period had any knowledge of it, nor, as far as I know, even suspected that such an occurrence had taken place. It therefore is of great interest as bringing to light an unknown historical event connected with the conquest, which might have been of the highest importance, and might have altered the history of the entire Coast.

I say might. For although we have not the definite answer, we can easily deduce what the reply to Pio Pico's letter was. We are not absolutely certain whether a later letter was sent direct to Seymour. It would seem improbable that another letter was sent; Pio Pico's letter with its certified enclosure was too definite to require amplification. As Rear Admiral Seymour was commander and supreme authority on this distant Coast, Pio Pico's letter was doubtless at once passed on to him to answer.

He did not answer promptly. July had come and almost passed before Seymour was ready to reply. Unfortunately we do not have his reply. Why he should have delayed, we do not know. British war vessels were coming and going. Seymour may have been expecting advices that would give definite instructions. At any rate his reply was delayed until July 23, and did not reach Pio Pico, still at Santa Barbara, until the 28th day of July.

No. 13. Letter written by Governor Pio Pico, dated Santa Barbara, July 29, 1849, and addressed to Don Diego Alex[andr]o Forbes, Vice Consul of Her Britannic Majesty at Monterey.

As this interesting original letter has also recently come to light for the first time and shows so clearly the chain of these events, its translation is published here. It is endorsed on the back by Forbes "Official from Pio Pico acknowledging receipt of R. Admiral Seymour's despatch of the 23 July '46. 29th July."

No. 13

The undersigned Governor of the Department of the Californias has had the honor to have received last night the official note which Señor George F. Seymour, Rear Admiral of the Naval forces of Her Britannic Majesty in the Pacific, has directed to him under date of July 23.

The undersigned acknowledges the receipt of this note and also that which Señor Forbes, Vice-Consul of Her Britannic Majesty in California, has directed to him under date of July 24.

The undersigned takes pleasure in renewing to Don Diego Alex[andr]o Forbes, Vice-Consul of Her Britannic Majesty in California, the sincere assurances of his most high and distinguished consideration.

God and Liberty! Angeles the 29th of July, 1846.

PIO PICO.

To Senor Diego Alex[andr]o Forbes
Vice-Consul of Her Britannic Majesty in California
Port of Monterey.



El infrascrito Gobernador del Departamento de California ha tenido el honor de haber recibido anoche la nota oficial que el Señor Jorge F. Seymour contra Almirante de las fuerzas navales de A.M.B. en el Pacifico con fecha 23 del presente Julio desde Monterey le ha dirigido.

El infrascrito al acusar recibo de esta nota, la hace igualmente a la que el Señor Forbes, F. Consul de A.M.B. en California con fecha 24 del mismo Julio le dirigió.

El infrascrito tiene el placer de renovar al Señor Jn Diego Alex.^o Forbes, F. Consul de A.M.B. en California, las sinceras protestas de su mas alta y distinguida consideracion.

Dios y Libertad. Angeles, a 29 de Julio 1846.

Pio Pico

Al Sr. Jn Diego Alex.^o Forbes
F. Consul de A.M.B. en California
Puerto de Monterey.

Letter from Governor Pio Pico to James Alexander Forbes, the British Vice Consul in California, July 29, 1846.
From the collection of W. Parker Lyon.

Official from Pro
Lico acknowledging
Receipt of R. Admiral
Symonds despatch
of the 23 July 1862
24th July
(33)-a

Endorsement on the back of the document shown
on the preceding page.

Governor Pio Pico's letter is addressed to Forbes at Monterey, where he doubtless was still in collaboration with Rear Admiral Seymour. The translation of this letter gives us very easily the inference as to what Rear Admiral Seymour's reply to Governor Pico was. The original of Seymour's answer is being sought in the Pio Pico documents. If not there, it will be found in the archives of the British Admiralty. But although we do not yet have it, the sequence of events tells us the story only too well. The letter is courteous and short, and evidently the answer of a very much cast-down man. In it he acknowledges the receipt of both their letters without comment, but with customary Castilian politeness.

Although Admiral Seymour's reply has not yet been found among the Pio Pico correspondence, Pio Pico's statement has been discovered (through the courtesy of Miss Eleanor Lawrence). It is brief and to the point, and is so important that it is incorporated here, both in the original Spanish and with a translation.

El Sr. Covarrubias a su vuelta me informo que habia tenida una entrevista a ese efectos con el Almirante ingles y este habia manifestado buena disposicion. Lo cierto es que el vino con el fin de ponerse en relaciones con el gobierno de Cal., y a su llegado se encontro con que la bandera de los Estados Unidos ya flameaba sobre el territorio. Por supuesto, ya no tuvo oportunidad de hacer nada. [Pio Pico, *Narracion historica*, p. 137, MS. Bancroft Library.]

Translation

Señor Covarrubias in his turn informed me that he had an interview to these effects with the British Admiral and that he had manifested a favorable attitude. The certainty is that he came with the end of placing himself "in relations" with the government of California, and on his arrival found himself confronted by the flag of the United States already flying over the territory. Therefore [in consequence thereof] he had no opportunity to do anything.

McNamara, the concessionaire of three thousand square leagues in the San Joaquin Valley, was delayed in the City of Mexico while getting his concession perfected. He came to Los Angeles to get it confirmed by the California Civil Government. He succeeded in doing this on the 12th of July, but Pico accommodatingly antedated the confirmation to make it read the 4th of July, or three days before the Americans landed. He was too late and Monterey was already taken. McNamara then proceeded, as usual in a British warship, to Monterey to endeavor to get his concession confirmed by the American authorities. And such confirmation was refused.

The statement of Pio Pico is pointed and clear—that the English admiral came for the purpose of "placing himself in relations" with the Government of California. What relations? Friendly relations? Certainly not, for they were already that. Also he bore the concessionaire to the greater part of the San Joaquin Valley! From the context and from the definiteness of Pio Pico's demand for intervention in his letter of June 29, the "relations" could hardly have meant anything except a British protectorate over California. Pio Pico's statement again is clear and definite. "The flag of the United States [was] already flying" (over Monterey where both fleets were), consequently "he had no opportunity to do anything." What was it that the British Admiral had no opportunity to do? Again, the writer believes that only one answer is presumable.

Evidently the dilatory Sloat had not acted a day too soon. And it was the knowledge that Frémont was backing a revolution and leading an armed force of settlers that precipitated Sloat into action at last. He thought Frémont must have had news that war had been declared. When he found he was mistaken, he turned over command to Stockton, and left for the East. Knowing the above facts as they now appear, can anyone refuse to believe that it was Frémont's praiseworthy carrying out of instructions that, at least, made certain the coming of California under the American flag?

As far as the British are concerned, it is quite evident that they moved only a little too late. They had not moved a fleet to distant California for nothing. Had it started a little sooner, and probably, had it not been held up by McNamara's delays at the City of Mexico there might have been a very different story to tell. But without Frémont's promptness in carrying out those never-revealed instructions he received from Gillespie, which now seem so apparent, the ultimate result could have been very different. As it was, California went safely under the American flag, as the Government at Washington had so wisely planned. Their officers did not fail them.

And what was the state of mind in Great Britain with regard to California? Had the strong Palmerston government remained in power, California might never have been American. Palmerston had a strong hand. He had his eye on California, in fact upon the whole Pacific Coast. But Melbourne's government had been upset, in which Palmerston was Foreign Minister, and Lord Aberdeen had come in as Foreign Minister under Peel. California was far away. A liberal government in England has never liked the idea of war; and particularly not with the United States. California was almost unknown; its tremendous resources were not then apparent. Consequently a resort to force against the United States, after that nation had taken a decisive step, was evidently not to be considered. Such, at least, is the writer's opinion.

Furthermore, as having a significant bearing upon this matter, it is probably just as well to set forth what Rear Admiral Seymour's views were as to California remaining a possession of the United States. I think this will throw some light on the actual state of mind at that time. And this is best done by introducing his original letter to Forbes, which is in the Templeton Crocker Collection of Sloat despatches. (It was printed in this *Quarterly*, Vol. III, page 88.)

H. M. Ship Collingwood,
Monterey, 22nd. July 1846.

Sir,

On quitting the Coast of Upper California, it may be useful to you that I should shortly state my views of your situation as Her Majesty's Vice Consul in that Province, under present circumstances.

The Squadron of the United States having taken forcible Possession of the Principal Ports, in consequence of hostilities having occurred on the Rio Grande between the Armies of the United States and Mexico, the value of the services of the Consuls of the different powers is enhanced, in order that they may assist in affording or obtaining Protection for their fellow subjects, whose interests may be compromised in the distracted State of Affairs which exists, or may be expected to prevail; I am, therefore, glad to have been informed by the Commodore Commanding the United States Squadron that there is no intention to disturb the Foreign Consuls in the exercise of their functions.

I observe in the Proclamation issued on the 7th. of July, that He acquaints the inhabitants that California will henceforward be a portion of the United States.

Whatever may be the expectations of that Officer, I apprehend He would not be warranted by the practice or Law of Nations, nor, I believe, by the Constitution of the United States, to declare that California has been annexed to that Republic; and that the Tenure under which the Forces of the United States at present hold this province should, therefore, be regarded as a provisional occupation pending future decisions, on the issue of the contest between the United States and Mexico; and in that light alone it should be regarded by you, until you receive Instructions from the Department under which you act, for your conduct.

I recommend to you the strictest Neutrality between contending Parties, and to conduct yourself with the prudence and circumspection which are so essential to make your Services as Her Majesty's Vice Consul beneficial in the present State of Upper California.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. F. SEYMOUR

Rear Admiral and Commander in Chief.

To

James Alexr. Forbes, Esqr.

Her Majesty's Vice Consul in California.

No. 14. We now come to the interesting original letter of Vice Consul James A. Forbes, and with which were originally enclosed three letters or despatches, Nos. 1-3. This letter has been hitherto unknown and of course unpublished. We know that, as to the letters which accompanied it, Commodore Stockton's letter, which will be given herewith, was No. 1. Probably Castro's reply, which will also be given, was No. 2, and it is probable that his address to his countrymen on leaving the country, dated August 9, or the same date as No. 2, was the third enclosure; but of this we are not certain. The letter is endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Jose Castro with copies of correspondence Agosto 9, 1846." The translation follows:

No. 14

General Headquarters
of Upper California.

I have the honor to forward to your honor copies 1-3 of the correspondence held between the Commodore of the naval forces of United States, and the General Command in my charge, in order that your honor may be advised of the conduct which I have observed in the midst of the trying circumstances in which I find myself; and as might easily happen, in case of an unforeseen disaster of war which might tend to blemish my reputation, which I will preserve unsullied to the last act of my life, I beg of your honor to deem worthy to hold these documents as authentic proof of my behavior, and to place them, if it may be necessary, in the knowledge of the Nation that you so worthily represent.

With this motive, I have the honor to reaffirm to your honor the protestations of my distinguished appreciation and courteous consideration.

God and Liberty! The Camp on the Mesa, August 9, 1846.

JOSÉ CASTRO.

Señor Vice-Consul of
Her Britannic Majesty
Don Diego Forbes.

This hitherto unpublished letter of General Castro is clearly the communication of a broken-hearted man. He knew that he could expect no succor and he doubtless expected to be defeated by Stockton and Frémont. Realizing these facts, and fearful that obloquy might come upon him, he forwarded this letter to Vice Consul Forbes on the day upon which he fled to allow the victorious Stockton to enter Los Angeles.

No. 15. Commodore Stockton's letter. This was translated into Spanish, and enclosed by Castro as number one of the three letters. It is dated at San

Pedro, August 7, 1846, and is endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Copy of Commodore Stockton's letter to General Castro San Pedro Aug 7 1846." It was also signed by Castro to guarantee genuineness. As it is necessary for comment, the translation of the letter is printed here.

No. 15

United States Frigate "Congress"
Bay of San Pedro, August 7, 1846.
To the Commanding General of
Alta California.

General:—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and with you deplore the war which is now waging between Mexico and the United States.

Also, General, I do not desire to do more than that which my duty requires me to do. I do not desire to wage war against California or her people, but as she is a department of Mexico, I cannot do otherwise than to consider her a part of the Mexican Territory. That is my duty.

I cannot therefore delay my operations to negotiate under any other conditions than that California will declare her independence, under the protection of the Flag of the United States.

If therefore, you may condescend to hoist the American Flag in California, I will halt my forces and negotiate a treaty.

R. J. [F.] STOCKTON.
JOSÉ CASTRO.

[The latter signature is Castro's to the translated message to guarantee its genuineness.]

No other historian the world has ever known has, in my opinion, manifested such a magnificent amount of industry in the collection of such a wide range of authentic original documents, as Bancroft did in preparing the histories of California and of the West Coast. Apparently nothing escaped him. He ranged everywhere; he quotes unlimited despatches, letters, and documents, from American and Californian, Mexican and Spanish sources. As a result of this splendid endeavor and achievement, we have the remarkable collection of books, papers, journals, and documents, that comprises the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, so complete and rich in all that pertains to the history of this coast.

In my opinion it is most strange that with this magnificent array of historic data, the context in some portions of Bancroft's History should wander so far from the facts as disclosed in his footnotes, which are a wonderful array of his authentic documents that bear upon the case. But it is a fact that he frequently gives in his footnote the true statement of an event, and will reason opposite thereto in the page of his "History" printed above. It is stated that portions of his "History" were written by other inferior writers, while Bancroft devoted his time and energy to the collection of the accurate data so remarkable in its volume. If the above be true, the almost impossible contradictions that are found may be explained. It is frequently said that one should read Bancroft's footnotes and disregard his context.

As it is, Bancroft is made to appear as a partisan, without good judgment, and whose opinions did not always seem to be influenced by the documentary proof that he presented. As an instance of this, we find the curious belittling of, if not actual attack upon, General Frémont, and also to a lesser degree upon Admiral Stockton. It seems to the writer most unjust that this should be. For

whatever may be his faults, Bancroft is still the popular authority of the events on the Pacific Coast.

To Bancroft, Frémont is a filibuster, an adventurer, a man of no character, and unworthy of the slightest commendation whatever in the acquisition of California for the United States. Contemporary histories presented a far different view.

Stockton and Frémont were officers of the Navy and Army. They were under instructions from their government, either in writing or oral, and were engaged under most trying circumstances and at a most remote station, to carry out their instructions in a high-minded and loyal manner. Their acts were not of their own initiative or volition; they were carrying out a duty imparted to them. No matter how imparted, the instructions were at least of their own government, which alone was responsible for such acts, and not the officers who were carrying them out in the field. If the Government's despatches, which Gillespie carried verbally to Montgomery and Frémont, had ever been published, it is probable that Frémont never would have been criticized for his acts. If there be any obloquy in this matter, it should be heaped upon the head of the United States Government and not upon these officers who, under great difficulties, were carrying out instructions in the most efficient manner.

We have just given General Castro's letter to Vice Consul Forbes, and we now come to the correspondence which accompanied it. In no instance is the failure of Bancroft's context to conform to his footnotes more apparent than in this instance.

As to Commodore Stockton's note to Castro above quoted, what could be more courteous than this most polite of despatches? Stockton deplores the war between Mexico and the United States, says that he has no desire to do more than his duty, does not desire to make war against California and her people. But California is a department of Mexico. He can only do his duty. "If therefore you may condescend to hoist the American Flag, I will halt my forces and negotiate a treaty. Your obedient and very humble servant" &c.

What could be more polite, dignified, and absolutely courteous, than every word of this note? And yet Bancroft states in his context that Stockton "rejected the Mexican note by putting his terms in the form of an insulting threat." Where is any insult, and where is any threat? Here is Stockton's note, with the added signature of Castro, certifying to its accuracy.

President Polk's policy had been to endeavor, through Larkin, to induce the Californians to withdraw their allegiance from Mexico and join the United States. Larkin was on board the U. S. S. *Congress* with Stockton, and it is easy to see his hand in shaping this courteous note. But as the conflict had already begun in Mexico, the American commanders had strict orders to take California.

Sloat had violated instructions, had dillydallied, and finally received the sharpest kind of reprimand for his conduct. Stockton was simply living up to his instructions. Castro's offer was for each to retain the territory then possessed; Stockton was to halt, and to negotiate a treaty. This Stockton could not possibly

do under his orders. But to term his reply to General Castro as anything but the most polite and courteous note possible under the circumstances, is simply to betray the truth.

No. 16. General José Castro's answer to Commodore Stockton.

This document was evidently the second enclosure by General Castro in his letter to Vice Consul Forbes. As we do not find that it has been published in its completeness, it is worthy of reproduction here in translation:

No. 16

With inexpressible surprise I have read the answer given by you to my official note asking for explanations with regard to the conduct which you propose to pursue on the invasion which the Naval and Army forces of the United States, now under your command, perpetrated in this Department under my charge. The insidious contents of that note and the degrading propositions which it involves have placed me in the necessity of reproducing to you my last communication by reason of my duty to defend the honor of the National Army under my charge and of which I am the representative, and to make it evident to you, to what degree I want to sacrifice myself in order to preserve free of stain the post under my charge. Since war exists between the United States and Mexico, and you in compliance of your duties make war against this Department which is a part of her territory, I, as Chief of the Mexican forces which are at my command, am resolved to defend at any risk her integrity and to repel an aggression that like yours has no example in the civilized world, and more so if it is taken into consideration that there is not an expressed declaration of war between the two nations. You claim that you cannot check your operations to negotiate on any principle other than that California declares her independence under the protection of the United States flag. Never will I consent to commit the baseness of such a thing; but supposing that I should attempt it, I would not do it under the degrading conditions which you propose. And what would be her liberty with the protection that is offered to her from the mouth of the cannon? I do not understand it; furthermore, you may be sure that while I am alive I will take care of this part of the Republic of Mexico, where I saw the first light, that she may not seal in this manner her shame and her slavery. Furthermore, believing yourselves, undoubtedly, that there is not a drop of Mexican blood circulating in my veins, and that I ignore the circle of my responsibilities, you invite me to the most shameless of your propositions which is that of hoisting the American flag in the Department under my command. Never, never, never. Much could I say to you in this respect but I will only ask you: What would you do if the proposition was vice-versa? For the last time, Mr. Commodore, I repeat that I will not spare sacrifice to oppose your intentions, and if by some adversity the flag of the United States ever flies in California, it will not be by my acquiescence nor by that of the last of my countrymen, and only will happen due to force and by force. In the conception that I solemnly protest before the whole world against the methods that have been put into practice, or may be so put in the future, to segregate this Department from the Mexican Union to whose flag it desires to belong, making you responsible for all the ills and disgraces caused in a war as unjust as the one that has been declared against this peaceful Department, I have the honor of paying you my homage of personal regard.

God and Liberty, Campo de la Mesa, August 9, 1846.

JOSÉ CASTRO.

To the Commodore of the Naval Forces of the United States of America in the Pacific and anchored in the bay of San Pedro.

This is a copy. Campo de la Mesa, August 9, 1846.

CASTRO.

[Original signature]

No. 17. We now come to an historical document, viz. General Castro's proclamation to the Californians upon leaving. It is evidently the third document enclosed by Castro. It is dated "Camp on the Mesa Aug 9 1846"; it bears Castro's original signature, he evidently desiring to authenticate the document sent to Vice Consul Forbes; it is endorsed on the back by Forbes: "Castro's proclama-

tion to his Countrymen on leaving for Sonora." This proclamation is fearfully misquoted in Bancroft, being condensed into a short paragraph which in my estimation bears little resemblance to the original, which is therefore reproduced here. The translation follows:

No. 17

The citizen José Castro, Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry in the Army of Mexico, Interim Comandante General of Alta California.

Fellow Citizens:

A month and a half ago we announced to you the war that a crowd of bandits, paid and directed by the agents of the United States of America, brought to our soil. And today, I have the knowledge that this same government, which has made protestations of friendship and which declared it had no part in what was done at Sonoma, has united with them, and perpetrated an iniquitous invasion.

But there is more. The American Government not content with the unjust usurpation which has consumed our Department, wishes to deprive us of our honor. It wishes us to betray our Mother Country, to separate ourselves from her breast, and to adopt the servitude of the American Flag, guaranteeing forever the bonds of our servitude.

Compatriots! Who of you does not feel his heart inflamed with anger to contemplate that not only does it wish to make us tributary slaves, but also has the impudence to prescribe to us that we shall voluntarily proclaim this slavery, as a favor which our gratuitous enemies allure us.

Fellow Citizens! I am very content with you; your grateful country will some day remunerate your loyalty, your valor, and your sacrifices; but she requires further constancy and your loyalty. The miserable situation in which this Department finds itself, the lack of resources to sustain War against a powerful Nation, enables it now to triumph over our feeble forces, but never, never over our hearts! Conserve always in them the same sentiments, the same ardor to sustain the sacred rights of our liberty and independence, and no matter what may be the fortunes of War, never belittle the glorious name of Good Mexicans!

Anew I exhort you compatriots, that pretending not to hear the false promises of our enemies, give to the entire world an example of loyalty and firmness, maintaining in your breasts, the unfailing love of liberty, and eternal hatred toward your invaders! Long live the Mexican Republic! Death to the Invaders!

Camp on the Mesa, August 9, 1846.

CASTRO.

We have nothing bearing upon the second and final taking of Los Angeles, although these papers did originally contain a printed proclamation of General Kearny to the inhabitants, in both English and Spanish. Unfortunately this was disposed of before the documents came to my notice and I have been unable to trace it.

We now pass to an event which occurred in the latter days of 1846, and which is mentioned only casually in Bancroft. These documents give us a far fuller light on this transaction than any history now contains.

On December 8, 1846, Francisco Sanchez, who lived on a ranch near San Mateo, exasperated by parties of American volunteers and regulars who came to carry off his cattle, gathered some neighbors around him, and captured Lieutenant Bartlett and five men, who were engaged in such a foray. It was supposed by Bancroft that this was practically a casual or accidental matter. But we have an unsigned document, evidently the copy of the official report of Vice Consul Forbes to his government, which throws a far different light upon the event. According to Forbes, and he doubtless knew, as he was married to a Californian wife, this was an organized revolt of all the Californians in the upper part of California, and was planned to co-operate with Flores south of

the Tehachapi, in order to make a complete revolt against the invading Americans. The number of Sanchez' adherents is stated to be from 200 to 400 men. They had a brisk skirmish with an armed force of 400 Americans, according to Forbes, including sailors, marines, and volunteers from San Jose. Although no one was killed, the Americans withdrew into Santa Clara and left Sanchez in possession of the field. And in considering this matter, it must be remembered that Francisco Sanchez was not only a private citizen but also Acting Comandante of the Second District. These documents are as follows:

No. 18. This document is possibly fragmentary. It is dated Santa Clara, Jan. 7, 1847, marked "Copy," also "Traduccion" (translation). It is endorsed on the back in Forbes' handwriting: "Extract of Orders from Captain Mervine to Captain Marston relative to capitulation." The translation is as follows:

No. 18

Santa Clara,
January 7, 1847.

Tonight I received from the Commander of the District the following Communication:

United States Frigate "Savannah."
Yerba Buena January 5, 47.

At the moment you receive this you may conclude an armistice with the leaders of the insurgents and those who are under arms in Santa Clara, as far as you are able. They have armed themselves against the authority of the United States, disobeying the laws, and violating their oaths and words of honor, having pledged themselves to abstain from all offensive participation against the present government.

Their protestations that they are not thus occupied are foolish words, as long as our officers and men are held prisoners of war.

You may inform them that their compatriots in the south of the Department have been routed, and that I will give everybody here the same treaty. They shall lay down their arms, deliver to you immediately their cannon and munitions of war, and disperse to their respective homes. You may give to those who have not given their words [parole] the security that they will be protected in their persons, goods, and rights, to the full extent of law and justice. The government reserves the right, just the same, to take all arms when it deems it necessary for the public tranquillity, also to take horses, saddles, etc., when the service shall require it, giving receipts for the full value of goods thus taken.

Furthermore, let them know that all persons whose cattle, horses, and saddles and other goods, have been appropriated for the use of the Government of the United States, may present themselves to the authorities with the necessary proofs, and they will be paid in due time.

You may make it clear to them that whatever acts of injury have been committed before my arrival here, that they may make them known by stating them to the Commander in Chief, by whom without doubt they will be satisfactorily compensated; and whatever violence or injustice they may have suffered since my arrival will be investigated as soon as they make such offenses manifest.

The foregoing may have been the complete copy of this despatch, omitting the signatures and so forth, as no further terms are mentioned by any historian.

No. 19. Now we pass to a document marked "Duplicate" in Vice Consul Forbes' handwriting. It is in English, is endorsed on the back, "Copy Jas. Alex. Forbes relative to fight at Santa Clara," and is dated "British Vice Consulate, Santa Clara, June 15, 1847." I do not believe that this important despatch has ever been made public.

No. 19

Duplicate
No. 1British Vice C. Sta Clara
15th Jany 1847.

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that the inhabitants of the Northern part of this Dept had become so much exasperated at the harsh and arbitrary measures of the American Volunteers in depriving them of their property, that they resolved no longer to suffer, and gathering a small force, surprised and took prisoners a Lieut. Bartlett and six men, who had made a foray into one of the farms in the vicinity of St. Francisco, for the purpose of procuring cattle for the use of the U. S. Forces at that place.

The Californian party marched rapidly to the interior with their prisoners; and were soon joined by a number of their countrymen; who with such arms as they had been able to secrete from the search of the Americans resolved to resist the U. S. Forces.

These forces consisted of a detachment of sixty men from the vessels of war, who had been quartered in the town of St. Joseph; seventy-five volunteers under the command of a German who [is] named Weber, (celebrated for his villainous acts against his benefactors the Californians who raised him from extreme indigence to possessions [and] property); between fifty and sixty immigrants residing at this place; and marines and seamen from Monterey and St. Francisco to make the number of about four hundred men.

The Californians were promised the aid of their countrymen from the vicinity of Monterey; but these were prevented from [joining] with those of the north by a party of Americans who had left Monterey before those men of the country could procure a suffi[ci]ency of arms and ammunition, to enable them to make any stand. The northern party however resolved to fight the American forces. The Californians after about fourteen days of rapid marching about by night and day, had received an accession of arms & men, and on the first of this month encamped in the plain of Sta. Clara; where they resolved to await the attack of their adversaries who were marching towards this place. On the 2nd of Jany the two hostile bodies met. The Californians in a disorderly but rapid movement, rushed upon the Americans, who had one field [piece] a six pounder; the fire of which only killed a few horses of the Californians, who however killed and wounded a few of the Americans. The Americans retired slowly into this place, and the natives of the country encamped about a mile from the scene of the skirmish. On the same afternoon they received intelligence that their countrymen could not possibly cooperate with them for want of horses; which had been taken by the Monterey forces.

In the course of the evening a flag of truce was sent in by the Californians desiring an interview with the Commander of the American party; who immediately called upon me to inform me that the Californians had sent him a flag of truce, and had requested an interview with him; desiring also, that I should be present at that interview. The officer begged me to accompany him to the conference with the Californian leader; and I being convinced of the utter impossibility of their ultimate success; their want of everything necessary even for a brief resistance being quite palpable; and also being aware of the ruthless disposition of the volunteers who had no other aim than to destroy the property and lives of the unfortunate Californians, and of all those who favoured their cause; determined me to be present at that conference; and without compromising my neutrality to aid in the cause of humanity, in putting an end to the evils to which these people as well as myself had been exposed; and to bring matters into a train which would lead to their safety and tranquillity. I accordingly accompanied the Commander of the American forces (Captain Marston of the Marine Corps) attended by Doctor Duval of Savannah; and another volunteer officer, to the vicinity of the camp of the Californians; one mile distant from this place where we were met by the Californian leader D. Francisco Sanchez and two of his adherents.

After stating the cause of their having taken up arms, which was wholly caused by the injustice with which they had been treated by the U. S. Volunteers; Sanchez desired to be informed whether he; and his countrymen might expect an impartial hearing of their grievances, by the Commander of the American Naval forces; in order that their property might not be taken with[out] any order or without any remuneration.

The Captain (Marston) assured him that there should be an armistice pending the decision of Captains Mervine and Hull. This armistice was kept more religiously

by the Californians than by the Americans; and on the 6th of Jany, their messenger arrived with the intelligence that if the Californians would lay down their arms and retire to their respective homes, they should be heard and their claims redressed, their property paid for; and no further aggression should be committed on their property.

I had forgotten to mention that the Lieut Bartlett was at my request, delivered up to me during the armistice, and was afterward liberated by the Californians, who acceded to the proposed terms of the American Commander, delivered up a part of their arms, and retired to their respective homes.

Since that day we have seen the commencement of different treatment of these people; and I trust that it will have produced a beneficial feeling in their favor.

I have considered it my duty to inform you of this affair and I also have the honor to accompany to you copies of the communications that passed between Captain Mervine and myself, in relation to the same; and beg to add that I have only been actuated by an impulse of sympathy toward the Californians in averting from them a very great evil.

I have the honor to be etc.

This is, in my opinion, Forbes' report to the British Government of the entire Sanchez transaction. It is unsigned, as such a duplicate, simply for his files, naturally would be. But it is endorsed by him, as being his document. From it I think it is clear that an active revolution of the entire Coast had been intended, Sanchez co-operating with Flores; but that the Monterey adherents were prevented from joining Sanchez because an American force had captured all their horses. Upon receipt of this news, Sanchez sent in a white flag for an armistice with a request that the British Vice Consul accompany the American officers, which request was evidently heartily endorsed by Captain Marston in command. There would seem to have been much fault on the part of the Americans for their conduct in levying upon the herds and provisions of the Californians without an order, a receipt, or a promise to pay. And this in face of the liberal and just terms offered to all native Californians by Commodore Sloat in his proclamation. Furthermore this affair was much more important than Bancroft is led to believe. He states that the American force was only 101 men (Vol. V, p. 380) while Forbes carefully enumerates 400 men. Other sources corroborate Forbes and place the Californians at about the same number. As Forbes was with the American forces in Santa Clara, he certainly should be correct.

Those in command were evidently convinced of the justice of the protest of Sanchez, however forcibly made, and only too ready to acquiesce in all his demands, and to close the matter with assurances that no such injustices would occur in the future. The one thing that these documents show us is that this was intended to be a complete revolt of all California, which was frustrated through the cutting off of the Monterey adherents. Bancroft is very sketchy about the entire matter, does not have this view, and seems hazy as to when Lieutenant Bartlett was delivered up to the British Vice Consul, who distinctly says that Bartlett was delivered up to him, at his request, during the armistice.

I think it is well to read the summing up of this Sanchez movement in the words of Walter Colton, the Alcalde of Monterey, in his charming book *Three Years in California*. It can be at once seen that Colton agrees closely with our Forbes document. I quote his beautiful words:

The outbreak at the North has passed away, and the last wave of commotion perished with it. This result is to be ascribed to the energy of Captain Mervine, to the moderation and firmness of Captain Marston and associates, and to the good

conduct of the forces under their command. Nor should it be forgotten that the Californians evinced on this occasion a disposition well constituted to bring about an amicable treaty. They took up arms, not to make war on the American flag, but in vindication of their rights as citizens of California, and in defense of their property. They had been promised protection—they had been assured that they should not be molested if they remained quietly at their homes—and these pledges had been glaringly violated. Their horses and cattle had been taken from them, under cover of public exigency, and no receipts given to secure their indemnification, at last they determined to have their rights respected or to die like men. Still it was necessary to meet them in arms and in sufficient force to inspire respect. And they were, however, well mounted and might, had they so listed, have prolonged the struggle, but this was not their object and they sent in a flag of truce. The conditions of the treaty were that they should lay down their arms, release their prisoners, and that their property should be restored, or such vouchers given as should enable them ultimately to recover its value. This was a reasonable settlement on their part, and the American officers had the good sense to appreciate its force. We must be just before we attempt to be brave. Laurels won through wrong are a dishonor.

This concludes the documents.

The personal letters are new and hitherto unknown. The official dispatches are probably all on record; although some, those of the Naval commanders, and what is doubtless Forbes' letter to his government, may be difficult of access.

This careful and continued filing of practically all official documents with the British Vice Consul, has been a fact apparently unknown to historians. It may be that contemporaries were aware of this carefully built up evidence in the case on the part of the Californians. If they were aware of it, I can find no mention of it either in Bancroft, the scholarly Hittell, or in any of the others that have come under my notice.

Furthermore, it has never been known that Governor Pio Pico demanded English assistance and desired to place his province under the protectorate of Great Britain. What occurred to delay Sir George Seymour's answer so long, we can only surmise. It may be that he was awaiting despatches from home as to the policy he should pursue. He would at least seem to have been weighing the matter well before replying. He might even have been considering an acquiescence to Governor Pio Pico's request.

There has been a general pooh-poohing by some latter day historians, headed by Bancroft, of the theory that Great Britain desired, or even had the intention of acquiring California. This view is directly opposite to that of the historians who wrote their histories nearer the time of the Conquest. It is a safe business axiom that the man on the spot knows the situation best; and those earlier ones were on the spot. These documents would seem to the writer fully to prove the earlier view. Great Britain did not move large battle fleets in those days for nothing. Sloat outsmarted Seymour in his departure from Mazatlan, as Bancroft's footnotes conclusively show (Vol. V, p. 211). The British fleet arrived too late. They were evidently willing on request to place a protectorate over California. But Frémont's activities had sealed the day; and together with Mervine's caustic utterances at the wardroom conference (again see Bancroft's footnotes Vol. V, p. 229) had finally induced Sloat to act. The American Flag was flying when Seymour arrived; the opportunity was lost. There was nothing

to be done. And after deliberating over Pio Pico's application for three weeks, Admiral Seymour evidently sent a negative reply.

It is apparent to me that the Sanchez revolt has never been understood by the historians. It has been considered as a personal outbreak due to the seizure of Sanchez' horses and cattle by American regulars and "volunteers." No one ever realized, until the statements of Vice-Consul Forbes have come to the light of day, that Sanchez revolt was the northern end of a preconceived organized outbreak, that was to embrace all the native population from San Diego to the north. Flores carried out his southern end of the revolt to the full extent of his ability; but the Monterey people, in the center of the region, seemed to have failed to move, from reasons that will probably never be known, to join in when the time came. Possibly they realized its futility. Sanchez and his neighbors did their best; but the movement was not complete enough to have any chance of success. And upon realizing that full cooperation was not being given him and that the southern Californians had been defeated, Sanchez wisely sought the best terms possible and laid down his arms.

These documents are indubitably authentic; and if their appearance at this time gives us side lights that had not been previously realized, we can only be pleased that even at this late day they have come to light, to give an added ray upon that brilliant movement which resulted in the acquisition and addition of its most beautiful star to the American Flag.

ERNEST A. WILTSEE.