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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOW WE ROBBED MEXICO IN 1848 ***

**HOW WE ROBBED MEXICO IN
1848**

By Robert H. Howe

1916

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HOW WE ROBBED MEXICO IN 1848

By ROBERT H. HOWE



Cathedral in Tepeozotlan, Mexico.

LATIN-AMERICAN NEWS ASSN.
1400 Broadway New York

THERE is one page of our own history that our historians pass over lightly and to which America cannot point with any feeling of pride, but only with shame and disgrace. I refer to the Mexican war. When the causes and results of that war are studied it can be readily understood why the Mexicans hate us and why the rest of the South American republics view us with suspicion.

Prior to the Mexican war the Nation was divided over the question of chattel slavery. That form of property had been abolished north of the Ohio river and Mason and Dixon line, but altho the South was still in the saddle, it felt that its seat was by no means secure. At that time the Nation consisted of 28 states, 14 of them free and 14 slave. States were admitted to the Union practically in pairs—one free and one slave state being admitted at the same time. This kept the United States Senate equally divided. But the more rapid growth of the population in the free states of the north threatened the political supremacy of the slave holding power. Wisconsin was applying for admission, and further west Minnesota, Dakota, Kansas and Nebraska loomed up as future free states. Louisiana, admitted in 1812, was the western limit of slave territory. Beyond Louisiana lay Mexico. Adventurers not only permitted, but encouraged by the slave power, entered Mexico and joined in a revolt against Mexico, and Texas was declared an independent state. Negotiations were immediately begun, looking to the annexation of Texas with the intention of dividing it into four states, and thus securing the South with a new lease of power.

Upon its admission a conflict with Mexico arose over its western boundary—Mexico claimed that the Nueces river was the dividing line, while the United States claimed the territory to the Rio Grande. This left a strip about 150 miles wide as debatable ground. Here was a question that could easily have been settled by diplomacy and a treaty drawn up and the War of 1848 prevented. But the American army invaded the disputed territory and was met by resistance by the Mexicans—a number were killed and wounded and the rest compelled to surrender. The war spirit always lying dormant in some people was lashed into a frenzy by such public declarations as "Our country has been invaded," "American blood has been spilled on American soil," all of which sounds strangely familiar to us today.

General U. S. Grant was a soldier in the army at this time and it is pertinent at this point to quote the following extracts from his Personal Memoirs:

"There was no intimation that the removal of the troops to the border of Louisiana was occasioned in any way by the prospective annexation of Texas, but it was generally understood that such was the case. *Ostensibly* we were intended to prevent filibustering into Texas, but really as a menace to Mexico.... And to this day I regard the war which resulted as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies." (Vol. 1, Chapter III, page 53.)

"The same people who, with permission of Mexico, had colonized Texas, and afterwards set up slavery there, and then seceded as soon as they felt strong enough to do so, offered themselves and the state to the United States, and in 1845 the offer was accepted. *The occupation, separation and annexation were, from the inception of the movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states may be formed for the American Union.* Even if the annexation itself could be justified, the manner in

which the subsequent war *was forced upon Mexico cannot.*"

"The southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. *Nations*, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times." (Vol. 1, Chapter III, pages 54-56.)

"The presence of United States troops on the edge of the disputed territory furthest from the Mexican settlements was not sufficient to provoke hostilities. *We were sent to provoke a fight*, but it was essential that Mexico should commence it. It was very doubtful whether congress would declare war, but if Mexico should attack our troops, the executive could announce: 'Whereas war exists, by the acts, etc.' and prosecute the contest with vigor." (Vol. 1, Chapter IV., page 68.)

War was declared and it ended in the complete defeat of Mexico. And then the greed that incited the war gained full sway. The 150 miles of debatable ground, the dispute over which brought on the war, was lost sight of. Mexico, defeated and helpless, was forced to sign a treaty giving to the United States not only all of Texas, which in itself is as large as the whole German empire and New England together, but in addition, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Is it any wonder that the Mexicans hate us and call us "Pigs?"

In the present agitation in America for the invasion of Mexico, ostensibly for the purpose of establishing order or punishing a bandit for an invasion which it has been declared on the floor of the United States Senate was organized and financed by Americans, they see a cleverly planned scheme of financiers to force intervention and they know that once the army and the flag were in Mexico they would remain permanently. They see that unless this is resisted to the death, the ultimate fate of Mexico is to be absorbed by the colossus of the North and her independence as a nation destroyed.

There is abundant proof that their fears are well grounded by the record of events that have recently occurred in Central America and the West Indies. Some years ago Nicaragua borrowed \$3,000,000 from J. P. Morgan & Co. of New York. A revolution broke out and this was urged as an excuse to land the marines from American warships to protect American interests. They are still there. America has established a protectorate over that country and the present congress has ratified a treaty and appropriated \$3,000,000 for the exclusive right to the Nicaraguan canal route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and it further stipulates that the money shall be used to pay its foreign debt under the advice and supervision of the Secretary of Treasury of the United States.

This is an example of what is known as "dollar diplomacy." First get a nation into debt and the rest is easy.

United States troops are also in possession of the Republics of Hayti and also of Santo Domingo under precisely similar conditions. The troops were landed and took possession of the Custom Houses; in other words, of the Nation's finances. Representatives of the United States are at the elbow of the native officials, dictating the expenditures and in general telling what may and may not be done.

Porto Rico is the absolute property of the United States. Cuba is dominated by the American tobacco and sugar trusts and cannot make any treaty without the consent of the United States government.

The Panama Canal strip was seized as the result of a plot formulated in Washington and of which President Roosevelt was fully advised—American warships were in the harbor when the so-called revolution was sprung. A provisional government was organized and immediately recognized by the powers at Washington; a treaty already drawn up was hastily adopted and accepted by Washington; the troops were landed and took possession of the ten-mile canal strip, and when the navy of Columbia, which consisted of one small gunboat, arrived, it was confronted with the American fleet and was helpless. All this was done within the space of forty-eight hours.

And this dastardly piece of land piracy was endorsed by all the governments of Europe—Kaiser Wilhelm personally congratulated President Roosevelt. Ten million dollars was loaned by J. P. Morgan & Co. to the Republic of Panama and the bonds are guaranteed by the United States.

In 1848 the dominant economic class was represented by the slave-owning, cotton-growing element in the South. They sent troops to the border of Mexico with the sole purpose of fomenting trouble so as to have some valid excuse for the invasion of Mexico. They succeeded and took from Mexico one-half of her territory.

The dominant economic class today is represented by Banking, Railroad, Oil, Mining and other interests and they are playing the same game that the exploiters of chattel slaves played in 1848. To prove this is an easy matter, all one has to do is to read a few extracts from the current press.

From the *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 1916: INTERVENTION GROWS IN FAVOR.

F Members of Congress Fear It Is Inevitable—Favor Annexing a Part.

* * *

It also transpires that many senators and representatives who advocate immediate intervention also favor annexing the northern portion of the republic as compensation for the cost of the undertaking. . . .

Typical expressions of opinion follow:

Representative Rainey—Events of the week seem to make it clear that there is no way of escaping intervention in Mexico. We have striven and striven to get along with our neighbor, but it seems impossible. We have on our southern border the longest boundary in existence between a civilized and a semi-civilized nation. To police it properly would require over 2,000,000 men. I favor taking over the northern tier of Mexican states.

Representative Sabath—I hope it will not be necessary to intervene, but if we do and are forced to lose the lives of a number of men, we should annex the country either wholly or in part.

SHOULD DO A GOOD JOB.

Representative Britten—If it becomes necessary to go into Mexico, we should make a complete job of it by annexing the northern tier of Mexican states.

Representative Denison—If it turns out that our troops were treated treacherously we should not hesitate to intervene. We should go southward, taking the border with us. We should either do this or receive a large indemnity.

On June 24, 1916, the Chicago *American* printed a cartoon that pictured in the most brazen way what the capitalists intended to do, and followed it later with an editorial from which the following extracts are taken:

"Nothing worth while will be accomplished by occasional 'punitive expeditions.'"

"The way to IMPRESS the Mexicans is to REPRESS the Mexicans. The way to begin is to say to them: . . .

"We are no longer planning to catch this bandit or that. We are GOING INTO MEXICO. And as far as we GO, *we'll stay.*" . . .

"When you see an American soldier one hundred feet inside of Mexico, you may take it to mean that ONE HUNDRED FEET ARE NO LONGER MEXICAN, BUT UNITED STATES.

"If you make it necessary for our soldiers to go in two hundred MILES, you can change your geographies and add two hundred miles to the United States.

"In this way we hope to make you realize that it is not wise to make us go in TOO FAR."...

"The United States OUGHT to make one single bite of the cherry, go down all the way, and civilize everything between the Rio Grande and the Panama Canal.

"The right kind of American enthusiasm will eventually DO THAT."

March 24, 1916, Senator James Hamilton Lewis introduced the following resolution in the Senate, recounting the fact that Villa, the "bandit," was notoriously receiving support of both munitions and money from Americans.

"The text of the Lewis "treason" resolution follows:

Whereas, It is known to the authorities of the United States that funds and supplies are being furnished to the force and following of Villa in Mexico from foreign countries, and from sources in the United States of America, and

Whereas, Such supplies and sustenance are being delivered for the purpose of being used against the soldiers of the United States and to oppose the authority of the United States; therefore, be it

Resolved, That those who are furnishing supplies and sustenance to the force of Villa for the purpose of opposing the United States are the enemies of the United States, and those in the United States who are furnishing supplies and sustenance to the said Villa forces, either of money or provisions, arms and ammunition, are within the provision of the laws of the United States defining treason as giving aid and comfort to the enemies of the United States."...

"I shall push my resolution vigorously," said Mr. Lewis, after the splutter of Mexican debate it had caused, died away. "I may call it up Saturday. The administration is in possession of means of information as to the identity of the persons or corporations who have been assisting this murderous Mexican bandit for the sake of filthy money or dirtier politics."

"The nation would be amazed to learn the names of some of the men of national repute who are mixed up in the intrigue against national peace. Many of them are noisy champions of the campaign for preparedness."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOW WE ROBBED MEXICO IN 1848 ***

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