

## SHAW BASHFUL AND SHY, ST. JOHN ERVINE SAYS IN ARTICLE

[St. John Ervine, in North American Review]

There is a kind of shy, embarrassed man of merit, who can not keep or even reach to his proper position in the world without making some sort of pretence about himself. Bernard Shaw is such a man. He has created his legend with such extraordinary skill that those who know him well have great difficulty in persuading the general public, which has neither the time nor the intelligence to understand a man of marked personality, to believe that the legend is a legend, that the reputed Bernard Shaw is not the real Bernard Shaw. The common notion is that he has an insatiable craving for publicity, is immensely conceited and self-centered, and does not care what folly of thought or conduct he commits if by so doing he draws attention to himself. The truth about him is that he is a shy and nervous man, singularly humble-minded and sincere, very courageous and full of quick, penetrating wisdom, and so generous and kindly that he may be said to be willing to do more for his friends than his friends will do for themselves. He is a Don Quixote without illusions. When he tilts at windmills, he does so because they are windmills, and he wishes them to be modernized and worked by electricity. In print and on platforms, Bernard Shaw brags and boasts and lays claim to an omniscience that would scandalize most deities, but no one who has the ability to distinguish between sincerity and mere capering in the least deceived by his platform conceit.

He is one of the very few men in the world who can brag in public without being offensive to his auditors. He can even insult his audience without hurting its feelings. There is a quality of gentleness and kindness in his most violent and denunciatory utterance that reconciles all but the completely fat-headed to a patient submission to his chastisement; and his most perverse statements are so swiftly followed by things profoundly true and sincerely said that those who listen to him are less conscious of his platform tricks than those who merely read newspaper reports due to the fact that the newspapers print only his flippant and fantastic stuff, and omit his vital matter. I have seen reporters at one of his meetings sitting with their pencils loosely dangling from their fingers while Shaw spoke wisely and deeply and then, when he uttered some trivial or outrageous thing, coming to life and hastily scribbling the jape into their notebooks.

Shaw, because he is naturally gracious, recovers himself more quickly than Yeats, who has cultivated his graciousness; and it may be said of them that Shaw has the manners of a man instinctively gentle, whereas Yeats has the manners of a man who has practiced deportment before a cheval glass.

## TO BE SECRETARY OF TREASURY IN MEXICAN CABINET



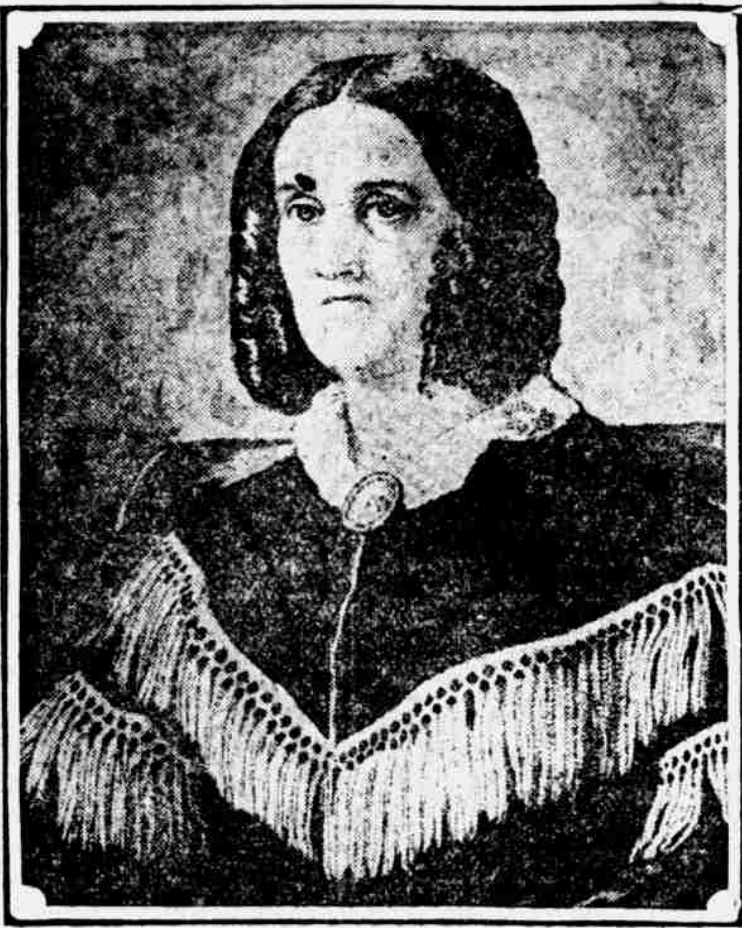
General S. Alvarado.

General Alvarado is slated to become secretary of the treasury in the new Mexican cabinet to be named by provisional President Huerta.

## Five Minutes with Our Presidents

By JAMES MORGAN

XXX—AN INGLORIOUS VICTOR



SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

ALTHOUGH Polk's Administration added more square miles to the map of the Union than any other except Jefferson's peaceable acquisition of Louisiana, history and posterity continue to look that gift horse in the mouth. Why? Our deed to that immense territory is much the same as our title to all the rest of our country, which was taken from the Indians on the fundamental principle that land rightly belongs to those who can and will use it.

What American today would wish that our settlers in Texas had been left at the mercy of Mexico, or wish that California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and parts of New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming still remained a huge, undeveloped, semibarbarous wedge of Mexican territory between us and the Western ocean?

Nevertheless, qualms of conscience over that conquest continue to disturb us. And this is a wholesome symptom of National scruples. Even if the effect seems good, the motive was bad. For Polk was put into the Presidency solely because he could be relied on to push the boundaries of slavery to the Rio Grande.

The new President really went into the White House with two land claims to press. Besides Texas there was Oregon (including Washington), which was then our only foothold on the Pacific and which we were occupying jointly with the British. The American claim in that unsurveyed region took in what is now the coast of British Columbia clear to Alaska, and the conflicting British claim ran down as far as Portland and the Columbia River.

Polk at once offered to compromise, but was rebuffed by the British Minister. Thereupon he withdrew his offer, and the Americans demanded everything, the parallel of latitude to which they claimed being popularly expressed in the alliterative phrase, "Fifty-four, forty, or fight!" But when we found our hands full with Mexico, the Polk Administration and the British government agreed on the compromise which the President had first proposed, and the forty-ninth parallel became the dividing line.

Although Congress and Tyler had

1845—March 4, James K. Polk inaugurated 11th President, aged 49.

1846—July 17, Oregon question settled.

1846-7—The Mexican War.

1848—Greatest territorial conquest in American history.

1849—June 15, death of Polk, aged 53.

hurriedly completed our part in the annexation of Texas, the very day before Polk's inauguration, and Mexico really had renounced the Lone Star State, the boundary still was open to question. The new Administration insisted that Texas extended to the Rio Grande and promptly ordered General Zachary Taylor to march to that river with instructions to regard as invaders any Mexican troops on this side of it.

After a year of challenging by us, a Mexican general took up our challenge and a skirmish occurred. Thereupon, at Polk's request, Congress declared that war existed "by the act of Mexico."

It was not much of a war, as wars go. But few military campaigns have

been richer in booty. General Taylor had only 5,000 and 6,000 men in the most decisive engagements. General Scott began his advance on the City of Mexico from Vera Cruz with 12,000 troops. But he did not have half that many effectives in his easy victories over a bankrupt, distracted Nation, whose feeble governments tumbled down every time we gave them a tap.

The Mexican War was redeemed somewhat from its military one-sidedness and from its bad political motive by the daring exploits of American commanders. While Taylor and Scott were advancing with their armies, Doniphan with a brave band was marching across New Mexico to Chihuahua City, and Fremont, with a handful of men, raised the flag over California and kept it flying.

We had hardly less difficulty in conquering Mexico than in propping up a Mexican government long enough to give us title in a treaty of peace, to the spoils of the war—522,558 square miles, for which we made Mexico a consulatory gift of \$15,000,000. Add to that conquest, the great State of Texas and the great territory in the Northwest which was confirmed to us in the Oregon settlement, and we have indeed a grand total of territorial gains under Polk's Administration. Yet it profited the President himself and his party nothing, because their policy was tainted with a purpose to widen the area of slavery.

A grim, little, care-worn man, with clothes two or three sizes too large for him, Polk did not cut much of a figure in the Presidency. Although Mrs. Polk's straight-laced religion banished dancing and cards from the White House, her popularity and distinction of manner shone in contrast with the drabness of her husband's personality.

"Madam, I have heard but one opinion of you," Henry Clay said to her. "All agree in commending in the highest terms your excellent administration of the domestic affairs of the White House."

"Indeed," Mrs. Polk beamed in reply. "I am glad to hear that 'my administration' is popular. And I will say that if the country should elect a Whig next Fall, I know of no one whose elevation would please me more than that of Henry Clay."

Polk declined the re-election which he could not have obtained. With his always frail body broken under the heavy labors of his term, this luckless ruler of fame retired to his home in Nashville. There he died in less than fifteen weeks after leaving the White House, and there, within a temple of Tennessee marble, he was buried in his own dooryard by the wife who was to survive him forty-six years.

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