

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### QUESTION OF FREE QUARTERS—SYSTEM OF FINANCE— SPREAD OF THE TROOPS.

EARLY in the campaign I began to receive letters from Washington, urging me to support the army by forced contributions. Under the circumstances, this was an impossibility. The population was sparse. We had no party in the country, and had to encounter the hostility of both religion and race. All Mexicans, at first, regarded us as infidels and robbers. Hence there was not among them a farmer, a miller, or dealer in subsistence, who would not have destroyed whatever property he could not remove beyond our reach sooner than allow it to be seized without compensation. For

the first day or two we might, perhaps, have seized current subsistence within five miles of our route; but by the end of a week the whole army must have been broken up into detachments and scattered far and wide over the country, skirmishing with *rancheros* and regular troops, for the means of satisfying the hunger of the day. Could invaders, so occupied, have conquered Mexico?

The war being virtually over, I now gave attention to a system of finance for the support of the army and to stimulate overtures of peace. The subject required extensive inquiries and careful elaboration. My intention was to raise the first year about twelve millions of dollars, with the least possible pressure on the industry and wealth of the country, with an increase to fifteen millions in subsequent years. The plan is given at large, in seven papers (four reports and three orders). See *Ex. Doc. No. 60, H. of R., 30th Congress, 1st Session*, p. 1046, and following. The orders are here omitted and the finance details, contained in the four reports, also.

*Report No. 40.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, December 17, 1847. }

SIR:

The troop of Louisiana horse, under Captain Fairchild, that so handsomely escorted up from Vera Cruz Mr. Doyie, the British Chargé d'Affaires, being about to return to its station, I avail myself of the opportunity to write to the department.

I invite attention to my order, No. 376, and particularly to its seventh paragraph—import and export duties. Since its publication, I have seen in a slip, cut from a Vera Cruz newspaper (received here by a merchant), what purports to be a letter, dated the 17th ultimo, from the department to me on the same subject.

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Major-General Butler's and Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston's columns will be here to-day, to-morrow, and the next day; and in a week I propose to despatch one column to San Luis de Potosi. When, or whether, I shall have a sufficient independent force for Zacatecas, is yet, to me, quite uncertain. The San Luis col-

umn, with a view to Tampico, and in part to Zacatecas, is the more important, and may be enlarged to, perhaps, seven thousand men.

The following distances from the Mexican official itineraries may be useful: From the capital to Queretaro, is 57 leagues, or 142 miles; thence to Zacatecas, 282 miles—the two distances making 424. From the capital to San Luis, is 113 leagues, or 382 miles (Queretaro may be avoided), and, in continuance by that route, 260 miles to Tampico, or 134 to Zacatecas. Thus, from Mexico, *via* San Luis, to Tampico, is 642 miles, and to Zacatecas, 516; whereas, the distance from Zacatecas to Tampico is but 398. Zacatecas, therefore, may be advantageously reached, or its trade opened with Tampico, *via* San Luis. The difficulty is, to occupy the state capitals of Guanajuato, etc., without passing through and including Queretaro, the temporary capital of the Federal Government; and I am reluctant to disturb that Government whilst it continues intent on a peace with us, without further knowledge of the views at Washington on the subject. That information I hope soon to receive; and, if in favor of covering the country, to hear of the approach of reinforcements behind the column of Brigadier-

General Marshall, now I suppose, as far advanced as Jalapa.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

*Report No. 41.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, December 25, 1847. }

SIR:

As I had apprehended (in Report No. 37), Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston's train has returned without one blanket, coat, jacket, or pair of pantaloons, the small dépôt at Vera Cruz having been exhausted by the troops under Generals Patterson, Butler, and Marshall, respectively, all fresh from home or the Brazos, and, as in the case of other arrivals, since June, without clothing! The regiments that came with me must, therefore, remain naked, or be supplied with very inferior garments, of every color and at high prices, as we may possibly be able to find the poor materials, and cause them to be made up here. This disappoint-

ment may delay any distant expedition for many weeks; for some of the new volunteers are already calling for essential articles of clothing.

Referring again to former letters on the subject, I beg leave to add that every old regiment forwarded, more than a twelvemonth ago, its usual annual requisition for clothing, which has never arrived, or it has been issued as above. With excessive labor I had brought the old regiments—volunteers as well as regulars—favored by our long and necessary halts at Vera Cruz, Jalapa, and Puebla, to respectable degrees of discipline, instruction, conduct, and economy. The same intolerable work, at general headquarters, is to be perpetually renewed, or all the credit heretofore acquired by this army for moral conduct, as well as skill and prowess in the field, will be utterly lost by new arrivals, and there is now no hope of bringing up to the proper standard distant posts and detachments. These cannot be governed by any written code of orders or instructions, sent from a distance. I do not mean to accuse the reinforcements, generally, of deficiency in valor, patriotism, or moral character. Far from it; but among all new levies, of whatever denomination, there are always a few miscreants in every hundred,

enough, without *discipline*, to disgrace the entire mass, and what is infinitely worse—the *country* that employs them. My daily distresses under this head weigh me to the earth.

I am about to send a detachment, the 9th Infantry, under Colonel Withers, to Pachuca, near the great mines of Real del Monte, some fifty miles to the north-east. There is an assay office at Pachuca, to which a large amount of silver bullion is soon to be brought, and if we have not troops present, the Federal officers of Mexico will seize the assay duties to our loss. I shall send another detachment in a few days to occupy Toluca, the capital of this State, with the general object of securing the contribution claimed for our military chest.—See General Orders, No. 376, paragraph 5. I am nearly ready to publish the details promised in the tenth paragraph of that order. I have found them very difficult to obtain and to methodize.

There will, I apprehend, be no difficulty in collecting at the assay offices and mints within our reach the ordinary internal dues on the precious metals. As to other internal dues and taxes (not abolished by my order, No. 376), I propose to find the net amount paid, to the Federal Government, for example, by the State

of Vera Cruz, for 1843, and to assess that sum, in mass, upon the State, to be paid into our military chest, a twelfth at the end of every month, by the State Government, and so of the other States which are or may be occupied by our troops. Each State will be required to collect the amount claimed, according to the Federal assessment for the year 1843, under certain penalties, which may be the seizure, without payment, of the supplies needed for the support of the occupation, and particularly the property of the State functionaries, Legislative and Executive, with the imprisonment of their persons, etc., etc., etc. The fear is, those functionaries may abdicate, and leave the States without Governments. In such event, the like penalties will be, so far as practicable, enforced.

The success of the system—on the details of which I am now, with ample materials, employed—depends on our powers of conciliation. With steady troops I should not doubt the result; but the great danger lies in the want of that quality on the part of the new reinforcements, including the recruits of the old regiments. The average number of disorders and crimes, always committed by undisciplined men, with inexperienced officers, may destroy the best-concerted plans,

by exasperating the inhabitants, and rendering the war, on their part, national, interminable, and desperate.

It will be perceived that I do not propose to seize the ordinary State or city revenues; as that would, in my humble judgment, be to make war on civilization; as no community can escape absolute anarchy without civil government, and all government must have some revenue for its support. I shall take care, however, to see that the means collected within any particular State or city for that purpose are moderate and reasonable.

It cannot be doubted that there is a considerable party in this country in favor of annexing it entire to the United States. How far that desire may be reciprocated at home, I know not, and it would be impertinent in a soldier to inquire. I am here (whilst I remain) to execute the military orders of my Government. But, as a soldier, I suppose it to be my duty to offer a suggestion on the subject, founded on professional and local knowledge, that may not occur to the minds of statesmen generally.

Annexation and military occupation would be, if we maintain the annexation, one and the same thing,

as to the amount of force to be employed by us; for if, after the formal act, by treaty or otherwise, we should withdraw our troops, it cannot be doubted that all Mexico, or rather the active part thereof, would again relapse into a permanent state of revolution, beginning with one *against* annexation. The great mass of this people have always been passive under every form of government that has prevailed in the country, and the turbulent minority, divided into *ins* and *outs*, particularly the military demagogues, are equally incapable of self-government, and delight in nothing but getting power by revolution, and abusing that power when obtained.

I still entertain the belief that propositions, looking to a peace, will be submitted by the incoming Government here, in all the next month; but that any concession of boundaries, satisfactory to the United States, would, on the withdrawal of our forces, create a revolt, or the overthrow of that Government, with a nullification of the treaty, I hold to be events more than probable. In the mean time it would be highly advantageous to me, officially, to have an early intimation of the views of our Government as to the terms of a treaty that would now be satisfactory, *only* to prevent

a wrong distribution of the troops in respect to those unknown views.

I have received no acknowledged communication from the Department. The letter of the 17th ultimo, published, as I have heretofore mentioned, in a Vera Cruz newspaper, has not come to hand, but I am daily expecting a mail up from that city.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

*Report No. 42.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, January 6, 1848. }

SIR:

Nothing of interest has occurred since my report of the 26th ultimo; not even the arrival of a mail; but a private conveyance brought up yesterday a letter from Brigadier-General Marshall, representing that he was at Jalapa the 22d ultimo, with a column of troops (number not given), one half of whom were on the sick report, with measles and diarrhoea, and that he had

sent back his train to Vera Cruz for medicines and other supplies. He gave no day for the recommencement of his march.

The number on the sick report, in this basin, is also great. In a total of 14,964, we have only 11,162 "for duty." The measles are rife among the new volunteers.

Colonel Withers, with the 9th Infantry, occupied Pachuca, quietly, more than a week ago. Brigadier-General Cadwallader, with the remainder of his brigade, will march for Lerma and Toluca (State capital, thirty-eight miles off, in a direction opposite to Pachuca) to-day. The general object in occupying the three cities is to commence levying the assessments for the last month, and, through them, to enforce peace. Please see copies of General Orders, Nos. 395-8, herewith. (Giving the finance details promised in Order, No. 376.)

The tobacco monopoly I have thought it necessary to abolish. It would be worthless without a prohibition of the plant at the custom houses, and I doubted whether our Government, considering the interests of some five of our own tobacco-growing States, would prohibit the importation. Again, to protect the mo-

nopoly, including licenses to cultivators, would require a host of excise men. Probably a reasonable duty on importation will give larger net receipts for a year or two than could be derived in that time from any monopoly however strictly enforced.

Like difficulties in management caused me to relinquish to the Mexican States, respectively, the stamped-paper and playing-card monopolies. More than a substitute will be found in the quadrupling of the direct assessments on the States.

From the want of sufficient numbers to send, at once, columns of five thousand men each to Zacatecas and San Luis de Potosi, respectively, I next proposed to despatch to the latter place a force of seven thousand, which would be sufficient to open the channel of commerce between Tampico and Zacatecas, a distance of three hundred and ninety-four miles, and, by the operation, double, perhaps, the receipts at that seaport, as well as the interior dues on the precious metals. The commercial wealth of Durango would soon fall into the same channel. But assuming seven thousand men as the minimum force for this neighborhood, including the capital, Chapultepec, Pachuca, Lerma, and Toluca, I am obliged to wait for further reinforcements to

make up the one column for San Luis. The delay of Brigadier-General Marshall, who had been expected daily for nearly a week, is, therefore, quite a vexatious disappointment. Possibly before his arrival (should the measles here have earlier subsided), I may risk a column of five thousand men, leaving, for a time, two intermediate posts vacant, and instruct the commander (Major-General Butler) to take into his sphere of operation a part of the forces belonging to the base of the Rio Grande. A detachment moving upon Tula, and, perhaps, leaving Victoria to the left, might coöperate very advantageously with the forces at the new centre, San Luis, and without endangering the line of Monterey, in which direction, it is supposed, the Mexicans cannot have any formidable number of organized troops. To concert the double movement, by correspondence, would be the principal difficulty; but ample discretion would be allowed in my general instructions.

Many of the States of this republic, on account of their remoteness from the common centre, sparseness of population, and inability to pay more than a trifle in the way of contributions, are not worth being occupied. Their influence on the question of peace or war is, proportionally, inconsiderable. As reinforcements

arrive, I shall therefore endeavor to occupy only the more populous and wealthy States.

Most of the mints (all but two, I learn) have been farmed by foreigners for terms of years (unexpired), on the payment of large sums in advance. The principal mint (here) is in hands of the British Consul-General, who paid down about \$200,000 in February last for the term of ten years, and contracted to pay, currently, one *per centum* on the amount of coinage. I suppose myself bound to respect such contracts until otherwise instructed. Other mints pay, I am informed, one and a half *per centum* on the money turned out. Hence a direction in General Orders, No. 395, to examine the contracts between the Mexican Government and the several mints. Those not under contract will be assessed as heretofore.

By two conveyances I am expecting mails up from Vera Cruz in two and four days. I am anxious to receive the views of the Department on several points of importance to me in this command.

The new Federal Executive and Congress are, as yet, not installed. Both, it is believed, will be strongly inclined to a peace.

I have the honor, etc., etc.,

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

WINFIELD SCOTT.

*Report No. 43.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, January 13, 1848. }

SIR:

I have not had a line from any public office at Washington of a date later than October 26.

The spy company has returned from Vera Cruz; but it seems that despatches for me had been intrusted to a special messenger (I suppose from Washington), who, after a delay of many days at Perote, came up with the company to Puebla, where he again stopped and retained all my letters.

Brigadier-General Cadwallader has quietly occupied Toluca and Lerma. As was known, the State Government had retired (thirteen leagues) to Sultepec. The general has invited that Government to provide for the payment of the assessment upon the State; but there has not been yet time to receive a reply.

Some days since, Colonel Wynkoop, of the 1st Pennsylvania Volunteers, tendered his services to go, with a few men, to seize the guerilla priest, Jarauta, at the head of a small band that has long been the terror of all peaceable Mexicans within his reach, and who has frequently had skirmishes with our detach-

ments. The colonel having missed that object, heard that General Valencia and staff were at a distant hacienda, and by hard riding in the night, succeeded in capturing that general and a colonel of his staff. I consider this handsome service worthy of being recorded.

Colonel Hays, with a detachment of Texan Rangers, returned last night from a distant expedition in search of the robber priest. In a skirmish, without loss on his part, he killed some eight of Jarauta's men, and thinks that the priest was carried off among the many wounded.

The spy company, coming up from Vera Cruz, had also a very successful affair with a large party of the enemy, and captured some forty prisoners, including three generals.

The second train, now out from Vera Cruz eleven days, was, as I learn by the enclosed correspondence, attacked by a numerous body of the enemy, and suffered a loss that looks like a disaster—the first that we have sustained; but further details are needed.

I have the honor, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

*Report No. 44.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, February 2, 1848. }

SIR:

Since my last report (January 13), I have received from the War Office letters dated November 8 and 17, and December 14.

My orders, Nos. 362, 376, and 395 of the last year, and 15 of the present (heretofore forwarded), will exhibit the system of finance I have established for the parts of the country occupied by this army.

It will be seen that the export duties on coins, and the prohibition of the export of bars, varies materially from your instructions of November 17, acknowledged above. I hope, for the reasons suggested in my report, No. 40 (December 17), the President may be induced to adopt my views in respect to the precious metals.

I am without reports from commanders of departments below, on the progress made in collecting the direct assessments under my orders and circulars. The *ayuntamiento* (city council) of the capital has charged itself with the payment, on account of the Federal district, of \$400,000, of the \$668,332 per year, imposed

on the State of Mexico, and arrangements are in progress to meet that engagement. Two months are now due. Brigadier-General Cadwallader, at Toluca, hopes soon to begin to collect, through the *ayuntamiento* of that city, a large part of the remainder of the monthly assessments, and I have sent Colonel Clarke with a small brigade to Cuernavaca (some forty-three miles south, on the Acapulco road), to complete the same collection.

The *war of masses* having ended with the capture of this city, the *war of detail*, including the occupation of the country, and the collection of revenue, requires a large additional force, as I suggested in my despatch, No. 34.

I see that I am, at Washington, supposed to have at my command more than thirty thousand men. Including the forces at Tampico, Vera Cruz, on the line thence, and in this neighborhood, our total does not exceed twenty-four thousand eight hundred and sixteen. Deducting the indispensable garrisons and the sick, I have not left a disposable force for distant expeditions of more than four thousand five hundred men, and I do not hear of the approach of any considerable reinforcement. Seven thousand men I deem the *minimum*

number necessary to open the important line from Durango, through Zacatecas and San Luis, to Tampico. Premising that I find it impossible to obtain from the volunteers, at a distance, regular returns, I send an approximate estimate of all the forces under my immediate orders. The numbers, among the volunteers, afflicted with the measles and mumps, in this vicinity, continue to be very great, and the erysipelas is common among all the corps.

I write in haste by the express who carries the *project* of a treaty that Mr. Trist has, at the moment, signed with Mexican commissioners. If accepted, I hope to receive, as early as practicable, instructions respecting the evacuation of this country; the disposition to be made of wagons, teams, cavalry, and artillery horses; the points in the United States to which I shall direct the troops respectively, etc., etc. (I have not yet read the treaty, except in small part.) In the same contingency, if not earlier recalled (and I understand my recall has been demanded by two of my juniors!!), I hope to receive instructions to allow me to return to the United States, as soon as I may deem the public service will permit, charging some other general officer with completing the evacuation, which

ought, if practicable, to be finished before the return of the *vomito*; say early in May.

In about forty days I may receive an acknowledgment of this report. By that time, if the treaty be not accepted, I hope to be sufficiently reënforced to open the commercial line between Zacatecas and Tampico. The occupation of Queretaro, Guanajuato, and Guadalajara would be the next in importance, and some of the ports of the Pacific, the third. Meanwhile, the collection of internal dues on the precious metals, and the direct assessments, shall be continued.

I enclose a letter from Commodore Shubrick, and have the honor to remain, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

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*Report No. 45.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, }  
MEXICO, February 9, 1848. }

SIR:

I have received no communication from the War Department, or the Adjutant-General's Office, since

my last report (No. 44), dated the 2d instant; but slips from newspapers and letters from Washington have come to interested parties here, representing, I learn, that the President has determined to place me before a court, for daring to enforce necessary discipline in this army against certain of its high officers! I make only a passing comment upon these unofficial announcements; learning with pleasure, through the same sources, that I am to be superseded by Major-General Butler. Perhaps, after trial, I may be permitted to return to the United States. My poor services with this most gallant army are at length to be requited as I have long been led to expect they would be.

I have the honor, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.