

right flank of the enemy, and thus contribute to his repulse. In this last conflict we had the misfortune to sustain a very heavy loss. Colonel Hardin, 1st Illinois, and Colonel McKee and Lieutenant-Colonel Clay, 2d Kentucky regiment, fell at this time while gallantly leading their commands.

No farther attempt was made by the enemy to force our position, and the approach of night gave an opportunity to pay proper attention to the wounded, and also to refresh the soldiers, who had been exhausted by incessant watchfulness and combat. Though the night was severely cold, the troops were compelled for the most to bivouac without fires, expecting that morning would renew the conflict. During the night the wounded were removed to Saltillo, and every preparation made to receive the enemy, should he again attack our position. Seven fresh companies were drawn from the town, and Brigadier-General Marshall, with a reinforcement of Kentucky cavalry and four heavy guns, under Captain Prentiss, 1st artillery, was near at hand, when it was discovered that the enemy had abandoned his position during the night. Our scouts soon ascertained that he had fallen back upon Agua Nueva. The great disparity of numbers, and the exhaustion of our troops, rendered it inexpedient and hazardous to attempt pursuit. A staff officer was despatched to General Santa Anna to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, which was satisfactorily completed on the following day. Our own dead were collected and buried, and the Mexican wounded, of which a large number had been left upon the field, were removed to Saltillo, and rendered as comfortable as circumstances would permit.



Death of Colonel Clay.



On the evening of the 26th, a close reconnoissance was made of the enemy's position, which was found to be occupied only by a small body of cavalry, the infantry and artillery having retreated in the direction of San Luis Potosi. On the 27th, our troops resumed their former camp at Agua Nueva, the enemy's rear-guard evacuating the place as we approached, leaving a considerable number of wounded. It was my purpose to beat up his quarters at Encarnacion early the next morning, but upon examination, the weak condition of the cavalry horses rendered it inadvisable to attempt so long a march without water. A command was finally despatched to Encarnacion, on the 1st of March, under Colonel Belknap. Some two hundred wounded, and about sixty Mexican soldiers were found there, the army having passed on in the direction of Matehuala, with greatly reduced numbers, and suffering much from hunger. The dead and dying were strewed upon the road and crowded the buildings of the hacienda.

The American force engaged in the action of Buena Vista is shown, by the field report, to have been three hundred and thirty-four officers, and four thousand four hundred and twenty-five men, exclusive of the small command left in and near Saltillo. Of this number, two squadrons of cavalry and three batteries of light artillery, making not more than four hundred and fifty-three men, composed the only force of regular troops. The strength of the Mexican army is stated by General Santa Anna, in his summons, to be twenty thousand; and that estimate is confirmed by all the information since obtained. Our loss is two hundred and sixty-seven killed, four hundred and fifty-six wounded, and twenty-three missing. Of the



numerous wounded, many did not require removal to the hospital, and it is hoped that a comparatively small number will be permanently disabled. The Mexican loss in killed and wounded may be fairly estimated at one thousand five hundred, and will probably reach two thousand. At least five hundred of their killed were left upon the field of battle. We have no means of ascertaining the number of deserters and dispersed men from their ranks, but it is known to be very great."

The nature of the ground at Buena Vista, made the battle a series of detached encounters, in which each side had at times the superiority of force. It was the work of the able commander to give unity to the whole by the proper direction of the several partial efforts. These divided operations gave splendid opportunities for the display of individual gallantry and state pride, which were cheerfully improved, especially by the volunteers, many of whom had never faced an enemy before, and were determined to reap laurels on the first field. It is a fact never before known in the annals of war, that almost every American soldier in the present war, considers himself in some degree its historian. Nearly every one is able to write, many have made engagements with editors at home to furnish accounts of their engagements, and each one is interested in the success of his own company that the account he must give may not be disgraceful. Thus a direct *personal pride* is brought to aid the military pride necessary to the formation of a good soldier, an element which must be of great account in explaining the success of our arms. The future historian of the war, possessed of the immense mass of materials thus furnished, will catch the

enthusiasm with which the brave soldiers write in the moment of victory, and build up for himself a reputation unsurpassed by that of any of the warrior historians, Xenophon, Cæsar, or Napier.

We give an extract from one of these letters, which illustrates at once the force of the above remark, and the bravery of a particular regiment.

"At a very critical point of the battle when it became necessary to sustain one of our columns, which was staggering under a charge made by the Mexicans, in overwhelming numbers, General Taylor despatched Mr. Crittenden to order Colonel McKee, of the 2d Kentucky regiment, to bring his men into immediate action. Mr. Crittenden found the regiment, men and officers, eager for the fray, delivered the order and rode back to the general, by whose side it was his duty to keep. The Kentuckians moved forward in gallant style, led by McKee and Clay, both of whom, alas! fell in a subsequent part of the day. It so happened that before reaching a position from which they could deliver an effective fire, the regiment had to cross a valley which was broken up by ravines and masses of stone. Whilst crossing this valley the heads only of the men could be seen from the point which General Taylor and Mr. Crittenden occupied—and these were bobbing up and down and crosswise in such confusion as to impress both with the idea that the regiment had fallen into disorder. The Mexicans were annoying them at the same moment by a fire, which helped to confirm the opinion of the general that the Kentuckians were thrown into dismay.

It was one of these decisive crises, which occur in every contested field, when the issue of the day de-



pended, for the time being, upon the gallantry of a particular corps.

General Taylor, who, as before said, could only see the heads of the troops, and misled by their motions in getting across gullies and going around rocks and other obstructions, into the belief that they were about to falter, turned to Mr. Crittenden, who is a Kentuckian, and with a countenance, indicating deep mortification—for the general is a resident in Kentucky too—and an eye fierce with emotion, exclaimed, 'Mr. Crittenden, this will not do—this is not the way for Kentuckians to behave themselves when called upon to make a good battle—it will not answer, sir:' and with this he clenched his hands, and knit his brow, and set his teeth hard together. Mr. Crittenden, who was mistaken by the same indications that deceived the general, could scarcely make a reply from very chagrin and shame. In a few moments, however, the Kentuckians had crossed the uneven places, and were seen ascending the slope of the valley, shoulder to shoulder, and with the firm and regular step of veterans of a hundred fields. On they moved until they reached the crest of the hill, where they met the enemy before the flush of a temporary advantage had subsided. Here they delivered their fires with such regularity and deadly aim that the decimated phalanx of Mexico gave way and retreated precipitately. As the Kentuckians emerged from the valley the countenance of the old general, who was regarding them with the intensest interest, gradually relaxed the bitterness of its expression. A glow of pride supplanted the deep mortification which fixed its muscles, and enthusiasm qualified the fierce glance of his eye. Forward they moved under his

riveted gaze, whose feelings became more and more wrought up as they approached the scene of carnage. When they opened their fire the old general could no longer restrain his admiration, but broke forth with a loud huzza,—'Hurrah for old Kentucky!' he exclaimed, talking to himself, and rising in his saddle; 'that's the way to do it; give it to them,' and the tears of exultation rolled down his cheeks as he said it.

Having got rid of this ebullition of state pride, he went about looking after other parts of the field.

The Kentuckians did their duty that day as others did. They paid toll in travelling the high road to glory as the list of killed and wounded shows."

On the 2d of March Mr. Crittenden set out for Washington with the official documents of the battle, escorted by Major Giddings, with two hundred and sixty infantry and two pieces of artillery, and having in charge one hundred and fifty wagons. At a mile distant from Seralvo the escort was attacked by General Urrea with a force of sixteen hundred Mexican cavalry and infantry. The enemy was repulsed with a loss of forty-five killed and wounded. Major Giddings lost seventeen men, fifteen of whom were teamsters. Subsequently General Taylor marched in pursuit of Urrea, who fled over the mountains. General Taylor then returned and fixed his camp at the Walnut Springs, three miles from Monterey, where it still is, under the charge of General Wool, to whose care General Taylor has committed the army while he himself returns for a little while to visit his family in the United States.

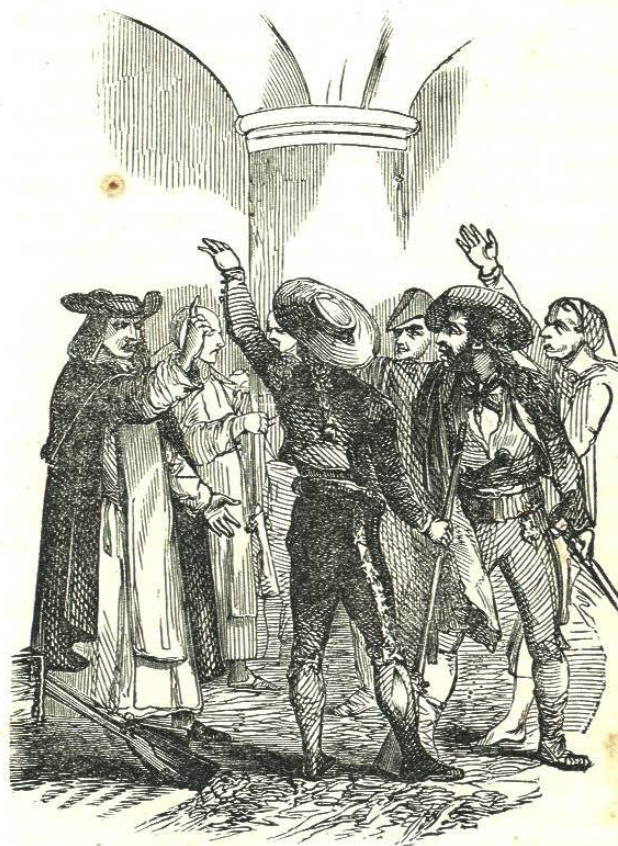
Along the Rio Grande the only warfare that has been waged since the capture of Matamoras is that of the



guerillas. The butcheries perpetrated by these bands are appalling, war without pity being their cardinal principle. The following manifesto taken from a captive of the band of Canales, by Lieutenant Bee of Captain Lamar's Rangers. Canales is a graduate of a sanguinary school, a robber chief by profession, and a cut-throat by nature; he is just the man to gloat over the barbarities of such a war. The pretended necessity for retaliation with which his proclamation commences refers to an excess of vengeance perpetrated by a few disorderly soldiers in a moment of excitement, occasioned by the most dastardly murder of one of their comrades by two of the band of Canales, who were found among the party of Mexicans that were slain. Without this outrage, however, the guerilla system would have been adopted, as it has been in the Central States. The Mexicans themselves are not more free from outrage and plunder at the hands of these bands than the Americans; and many instances can be cited where the unfortunate inhabitants welcome the approach of their foes that they may have protection from these their pretended friends.

"I this day send to the adjutant inspector of the National Guards the following instructions:

I learn, with the greatest indignation, that the Americans have committed a most horrible massacre at the rancho of the Guadalupe. They made prisoners, in their own houses and by the side of their families, twenty-five peaceable men, and immediately shot them. To repel this class of warfare, which is not war but atrocity in all its fury, there is no other course left us than retaliation; and in order to pursue this method, rendered imperative by the fatal circumstances above mentioned, you will



Commencement of the Guerilla Warfare.