



General Scott.



GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT.

**T**HE genial soil of the Old Dominion, noble, brave, patriotic Virginia, which has given to the republic a host of illustrious names, in the senate, the army, and on the ocean, was the birthplace also of the gallant soldier whose life forms the subject of the present sketch.

Winfield Scott was born June 13th, 1786, at the family seat, near Petersburg. His parents were of Scottish descent.

Of his earlier years but little is known out of the circle of his family. He chose the legal profession, and finished his studies at about his twenty-first year. His disposition for military pursuits manifested itself about the same time. The proclamation of the president, issued after the dastardly attack on the Chesapeake,



Taken prisoner at Queenstown.

having induced the formation of volunteer corps in various parts of the country, Scott enrolled himself in the troop of horse raised in Petersburg. This was in 1807.

Early in the succeeding year he obtained a commission as captain in the light artillery corps of the United States army. During the four years intervening before the declaration of war, he continued in this rank, but nothing occurred to break the monotony of a soldier's life in time of peace.

On the breaking out of hostilities with England, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the 2d regiment of artillery, and ordered to Black Rock, where lieutenant, afterwards Commodore, Elliott, and himself co-operated in cutting out two British armed brigs, anchored under the guns of Fort Erie.

On the 13th of October, 1812, he was taken prisoner in the battle of Queenstown, after resisting with three hundred, an army of enemies numbering thirteen hundred.

During the battle he had been conspicuous for daring courage and perfect coolness and self-possession. His tall and commanding form made him a constant mark for the Indian sharp shooters, who vainly tried to hit him. So great was their exasperation at their want of success, that after the battle they could with difficulty be restrained from committing violence to his person, and it was found necessary to place him under a close guard.

Having been exchanged, he rejoined the army in May, 1813, and shortly afterwards won the battle of Fort George. He was the first to enter the fort and pull down the British flag, closely followed by Colonel

In the battles of Chippewa and Niagara.

Porter, who exclaimed, "Confound your long legs, Scott, you have got in before me."

On the 9th of March, 1814, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. In that capacity he fought in the battle of Chippewa. He was ever where the balls flew thickest. During the battle, he called out to a battalion, "The enemy say we are good at longshot, but cannot stand the cold iron. I call on the 11th instantly to give the lie to that slander. Charge!" The charge thus ordered decided the day. In the battle of Niagara, which soon followed, General Scott had two horses killed under him, received a wound in the side in the midst of the action, and was afterwards dangerously wounded in the shoulder. For many weeks he suffered from the wounds received on this day. Congress passed a vote of thanks for his skill and gallantry at Chippewa and Niagara, and for his uniform good conduct throughout the war, a compliment paid by Congress to no other officer. A gold medal was also voted to him by Congress. This medal General Scott afterwards deposited in the City Bank of New York for safe keeping. The bank was entered and robbed of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, but the gold medal was left. The robber afterwards said, when arrested, that in taking the gold beside it, he saw the medal, and knew its value, but scorned to rob a man of the reward given by the gratitude of his country for distinguished services. The states of New York and Virginia each voted him thanks and a sword. After the close of the war, General Scott visited Europe.

He took part in the Black Hawk war, the part of a nurse in the hospitals, where he watched with the utmost



solicitude, while sick himself, the bedsides of the many unfortunate soldiers who were sick with the cholera.

In the days of the nullification question he prepared to stand by General Jackson in the preservation of the Union, but took care by his bearing to conciliate rather than exasperate the people of South Carolina. In the Florida war he was unfortunate, devastating diseases and the lateness of the season preventing his meeting the enemy, though his plan of campaign was well devised, and prosecuted with zeal, energy, steadiness, and ability.

During the winter of 1838-9, he was occupied on the Canada frontier, every where by turns, without an army, travelling principally by night, with the thermometer ranging from ten to forty degrees below the freezing point. He made speeches to excited sympathizing Americans with arms in their hands, scattered along a line of eight hundred miles, and with the happiest effect. To the firmness of President Van Buren, and the signal ability of General Scott the country owed its exemption from what appeared to be the inevitable war with Great Britain.

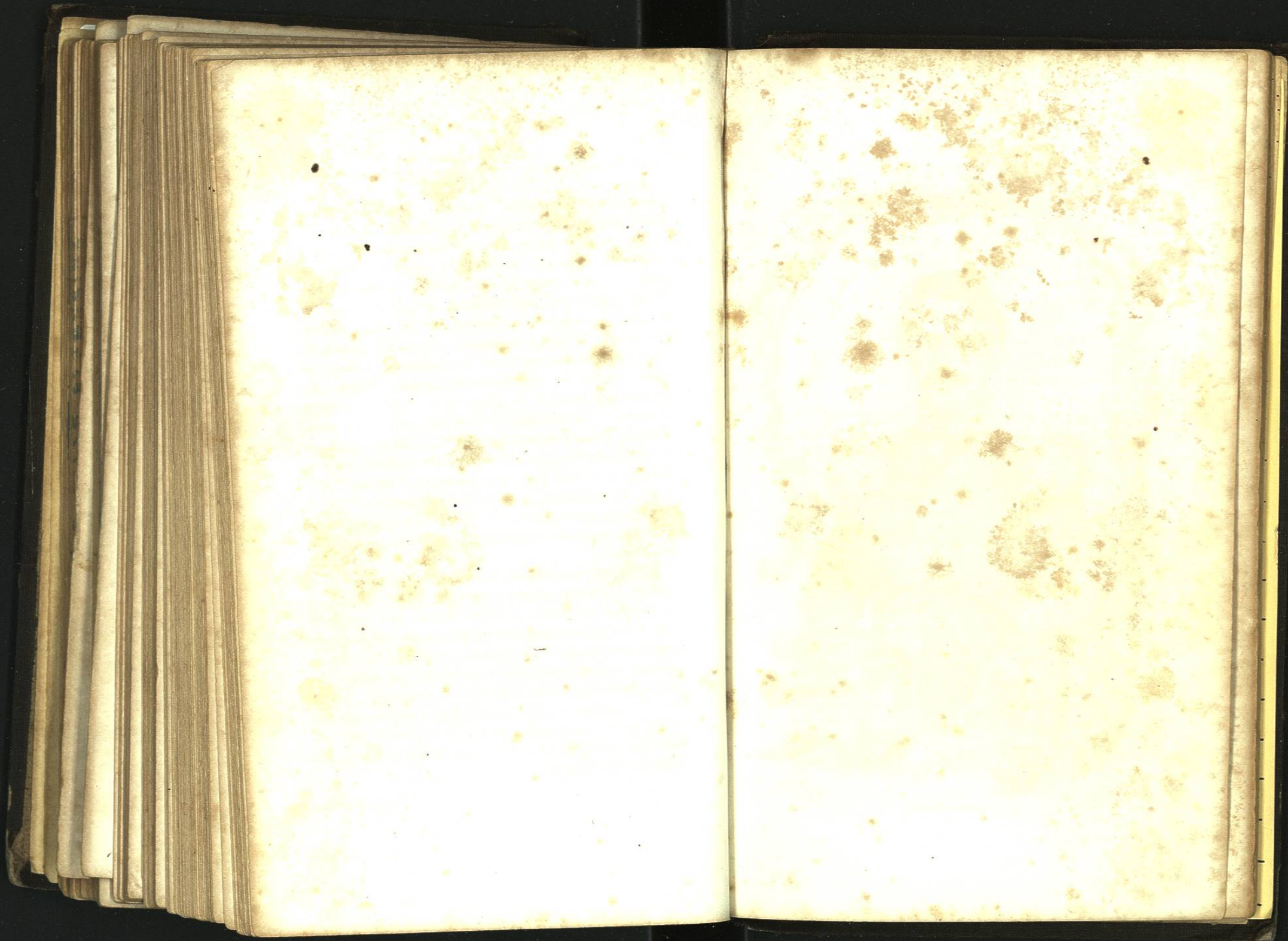
By his masterly skill and energy he also saved the country from difficulties with the Cherokees, whom he removed to the west. By obtaining the esteem and confidence of the poor Cherokees themselves, his noble generosity and humanity effected what all supposed could not be done without the most heartrending scenes of butchery and bloodshed. The Indians, who a few months before were ready to yield their lives rather than leave their homes, looked upon the very man who had

executed the obnoxious measure, as a benefactor and friend who had saved them from entire destruction.

His country found his services invaluable in the settlement of the Maine boundary question. When he was ordered to command the invading army in Mexico, he obeyed the call with his usual promptness, notwithstanding a coolness that had existed for some time between him and the government. From his landing at Vera Cruz till the capture of the capital, his history has been detailed in the preceding pages. Where the danger is greatest he is always to be found, regardless of his life, and only anxious for the safety of his men. Walking along the trenches at Vera Cruz, in full range of the enemy's guns, he noticed the soldiers rise frequently and look over the parapet. "Down, down, men," he exclaimed, "don't expose yourselves." "But, general, *you* are exposed." "Oh," he replied, "generals now-a-days can be made out of any body, *men* cannot be had."

His military genius and foresight has shown out conspicuously during his last campaign. With signal tact he planned the details of all his battles, and prepared with prophetic eye to follow up his victories even before they were gained. In a few short weeks, in the face of gloomy apprehensions and predictions, he seizes the impregnable key to the high road to the capital, storms the Thermopylæ of the country, and consummates the work by an achievement, that it is impossible to overrate, the taking of the capital. All honour to Scott, his officers, and his men.









General Shields.



#### BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES SHIELDS.



GENERAL SHIELDS, one of the most distinguished of all our officers in the Mexican war, is a native of Ireland, but emigrated to this country in early life. Like many of his countrymen, he took a warm interest in our struggle with Great Britain, and entered the army as second lieutenant, 11th infantry, September 1st, 1814. He appears to have served with credit during the war, but left the service soon after its close. The history of his life from this time until the opening of the Mexican war, is lost in the



obscurity of retirement. But his merit as a soldier seems to have been known to a large circle of friends; so that on the 1st of July, 1846, soon after the opening of hostilities on the Rio Grande, he received the appointment of brigadier-general. Leaving his residence in Illinois, he joined the Central Division of General Wool, and accompanied that able officer in his famous march through the provinces of Chihuahua and New Mexico, to Monclova. Here, in common with a number of other officers, he was detached as a reinforcement to the army of General Scott. At Vera Cruz he was distinguished for his undaunted bravery, and indefatigable exertions, being in the field during the whole time that the siege lasted, and often exposed to the castle's heaviest fire.

But the military talents of General Shields were first fully developed at Cerro Gordo. In the general orders of April 17th, he was intrusted with the care of the Jalapa road, in order to keep the enemy in that quarter engaged during the main attack, and to cut off retreat. In both these objects he was successful. By his activity he contributed largely to the victory of that memorable day, and elicited the admiration of both General Scott and his brother officers. In the pursuit he received a musket ball through the lungs, by which he was immediately prostrated, the command devolving on Colonel Baker. His life was for a while despaired of, but eventually, to the astonishment of all, he recovered.

During the long stay of the army at Puebla we hear little of General Shields; but he again appears amid the toils and dangers of the march toward the capital. Late on the 19th of August, while the storming of Contreras was in progress, he was sent to a village near that fort

in order to afford assistance to General Smith. A deep rugged ravine, along whose bed rolled a rapid stream, was passed with great difficulty, in consequence of the increasing darkness; after which the general ordered his weary troops to lie upon their arms until midnight, in order to prepare for further duty. In the mean while he threw out two strong pickets, who, perceiving a body of Mexican infantry moving through the fields toward the city, opened a sharp fire, and succeeded in driving them back. At midnight Shields' troops resumed their march, and soon joined Smith's brigade, at the place appointed.

At this time General Shields performed an action so delicate and magnanimous, as to deserve record with the more dazzling ones which were soon to follow. Previous to his arrival, Smith had completed those judicious arrangements for turning and surprising the Mexican position, which were afterwards so brilliantly successful. As Shields was the senior officer, he could have assumed the command, as well as the execution of General Smith's plans, thus debarring that officer from the fruit of his labour. But this he nobly refused to do, and withdrew his men to the position formerly occupied by his brother veteran. About daybreak the Mexicans opened a brisk fire of grape and round shot upon the church and village where the general was stationed, as also upon a part of the troops displayed to divert him on his right and front. This continued until Colonel Riley's brigade opened its fire from the rear, which was delivered with such terrible effect, that the whole Mexican force was thrown into consternation.

At this juncture Shields ordered the two regiments of



his command to throw themselves on the main road by which the enemy must retire, so as to intercept and cut off their retreat. Although officers and men had suffered severely during the night's march, as well as from exposure without shelter or cover, to the incessant rain until daybreak, this movement was executed in good order and with rapidity. Crossing a deep ravine, the Palmetto regiment deployed on both sides of the road, and opened a most destructive fire upon the mingled masses of infantry and cavalry; and the New York regiment, brought into line lower down, and on the road-side, delivered its fire with a like effect. At this point many of the enemy were killed and wounded, some three hundred and sixty-five captured, including twenty-five officers.

Meanwhile the enemy's cavalry, about three thousand strong, which had been threatening the village during the morning, moved down toward it in good order as if to attack. General Shields immediately recalled the infantry so as to place them in a position for meeting the threatened movement; but the cavalry soon changed its position, and retreated toward the capital. Orders now arrived from General Twiggs for the troops to advance by the main road toward Mexico; and accordingly having posted Captain Marshall's company of South Carolina volunteers, and Captain Taylor's New York volunteers in charge of the wounded and prisoners, Shields moved off with the remainder of his force, and reached the positions of those divisions already moving on the main road.

After turning the village of Coyoacan, Shields moved with his command toward the right, through a heavy

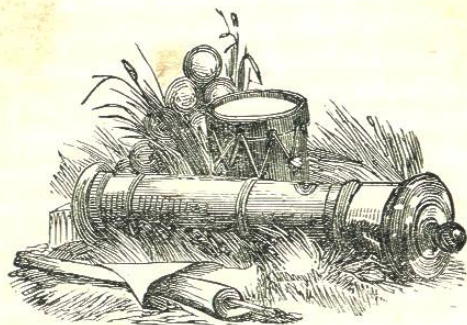
corn-field, and gained an open and swampy plain, in which is situated the hacienda de los Partales. On arriving there he established his right upon a point recommended by Captain Lee, an engineer officer of great skill and judgment, at the same time commencing a movement to the left so as to flank the enemy's right and throw his troops between them and the city. Finding, however, their right supported by a body of cavalry, three thousand strong, and perceiving that the enemy answered to his own movements by a corresponding one toward the American right flank, and owing to the advantages of the ground, gaining rapidly on him, he withdrew his men to the hacienda for the purpose of attacking the enemy in front. The conflict was close and stubborn, until General Shields, taking advantage of a slight wavering in the Mexican ranks, ordered a charge. This was obeyed with alacrity and success, the enemy breaking and flying on all sides. Shields continued to press upon the fugitives, until passed by Colonel Harney with his cavalry who followed the routed foe into the very gates of the city.

On the 10th of September, General Shields, with the New York and South Carolina regiments, was ordered first to Piedad, and subsequently to Tacubaya, preparatory to the assault upon Chapultepec. Here he continued a heavy cannonade upon the enemy's lines until early on the morning of the 13th, when his command moved to the assault. While directing the advance Shields was severely wounded in the arm; yet no persuasion could induce him to leave his command or quit the field. In company with the remainder of Quitman's division, he pushed rapidly forward along the Belen



road, exposed to the most tremendous fires, overthrowing one after another of the Mexican strongholds, until, finally his victorious banners were planted over the principal gateway. When night fell he was carried from the field sick, exhausted, and writhing with pain. His wound, although severe, was, happily, not mortal; and rest, together with careful attention, united with a strong constitution, speedily restored him to health.

After remaining some time with the army in Mexico, General Shields, in company with several other officers, visited the United States, where he still remains.



## SUPPLEMENT.

### CONCLUSION OF THE WAR.

Although the attempts of Mr. Trist to conclude a treaty of peace immediately after the battle of Churubusco had not been successful, yet, in concert with the commander-in-chief, he lost no opportunity to repeat his overtures for so desirable an object. It was not, however, until the beginning of the following year, that the Mexicans would listen to such proposals. Their army was then reduced to a few insignificant parties, scattered here and there, more for safety than any hope of opposition to the invaders. Even the guerillas manifested symptoms of weariness. Accordingly, when in January, 1848, General Scott laid before the Mexican congress articles of a treaty, based upon those formerly rejected, that body immediately appointed Luis G. Cuevas, Bernardo Conto, and Miguel Atristain, as commissioners. These gentlemen, with Mr. Trist, acting on behalf of the United States, assembled at Guadalupe Hidalgo, and concluded a treaty of "peace, friendship, limits, and settlement" between the two republics.

The only thing still necessary to the conclusion of the war, was the ratification of the new treaty by the legislature of each country. In February the attested copy was received at Washington by President Polk, and transmitted to the United States senate. After being slightly amended, it was passed in that body, on the