

GENERAL WOOL.

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John E. Wool was born in Orange county, in the state of New-York. Of his childhood we are told little, except that at a very early age he lost his father, and removed to the country-seat of his grandfather, in Rensselaer county. He appears to have been a boy of good habits and enterprising disposition, but at first his talents leaned more toward commercial business than war. Accordingly, he was placed as clerk to an establishment in the city of Troy, where his fidelity and application were such as to secure him the esteem of his employers, and in due time was admitted to their number. Business prospered, and for a few years, he seemed to be in a fair way to acquire a wealthy independence. But these fair prospects were blasted by a fire which stripped him of every thing, and launched him upon the world, once more penniless. But a new field of enterprise now displayed itself; the difficulties between England and the United States concerning impressment were daily becoming more alarming; and in anticipation of war, numbers of young men flocked into the army. Among these was young Wool, who was commissioned as captain of the 13th infantry, on the 14th of April, 1812. In the fall of the same year he fought at Queenston Heights, and displayed



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such courage and ability that he was rewarded with the rank of major of the 29th infantry. In 1814 he was with General Macomb at Plattsburg, where he led a separate command with efficiency and success. Before the main attack of the 11th, he fought the battle of Beekmantown road, with 250 men, mostly raw militia, against a very large force of the enemy. The struggle was long, and so bloody that more than 300 men were killed and wounded between Beekmantown and the Saranac river. The British were foiled in all their attempts to cross the river, and Wool remained master of the field. The victory was of great importance to the Americans, as it is more than probable that without it, a portion of the British troops, on the night of the 6th of September, would have slept within the American lines.

For this distinguished conduct Wool received the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel in his own regiment, and the thanks of Congress. He was subsequently in the unfortunate affair of La Cole Mill, in the battle of Adletown, and other smaller engagements, in all of which he displayed the same coolness and officer-like conduct, as he had displayed at Queenston. In 1816 he was appointed inspector-general, a situation of no little difficulty and hardship. In the performance of his duties he was obliged to journey through every part of the United States, often over mountains and prairies, through dense forests, and uninhabitable wilds, where no foot but the Indian's ever trod. In the territories of Indiana, Missouri, Illinois and Iowa, he was often in the woods for months, exposed to hunger, cold, and almost every hardship which man can endure, with only Indian guides, whose fidelity was ex-

tremely precarious. Yet his persevering mind overcame every obstacle, and he was uniformly cheerful and zealous, and always made it a point to sacrifice ease and pleasure to duty. His services were the theme of admiration to both civil and military officers, and he was not unrewarded by government. In 1826, he was brevetted brigadier-general in reward for ten years' faithful services as inspector-general; and on the 25th of June, 1841, he received further promotion, as full brigadier-general, and intrusted with the command of the Eastern Division of the army, which had been vacated by the appointment of General Scott as commander-in-chief, on the death of General Macomb.

While inspector-general, Wool was engaged in some most important events not immediately connected with his office, but which rendered him for some time a conspicuous object to the army. The first of these was his commission to suppress the troubles on the Canada border. When the Canadians took up arms against the mother-country, numbers of individuals, prompted by sympathy and a kind of secret grudge against the old enemy, lent the insurgents their best wishes. Others went further. They transported supplies of provisions and military stores to them, and afterwards crossed the St. Lawrence to join their armies. These acts were considered by Great Britain as national assistance to treason, and, consequently her soldiers were not very lenient to the Americans who fell into their hands. Deeds of murder and robbery were given and retaliated, until the whole border was in a tumult of danger and excitement. The memory of these events is fresh to the

inhabitants of the United States. The whole country was oppressed with gloom and foreboding, and war with Great Britain was confidently expected. Had this been resorted to, it would have been far more terrible than any which has transpired since the days of Napoleon; and it is probable that we were saved from it only by the genius of one man—that man was General Wool. By firmness and indefatigable exertion, he broke up the mob meetings, prevented the injury of British or American 'bordermen,' stopped all nightly parties whose object was plunder, and prevailed on the disaffected to surrender their arms and return home.

General Wool was appointed to superintend the Cherokee negotiation, during the arrangement for a treaty between them and the United States, prior to their removal west of the Mississippi. In this affair he acted with so much delicacy, as to win the acknowledgments of government, and the thanks of the Indians themselves.

A somewhat more pleasing event than those we have mentioned, was his military visit to Europe, whose object was to gather hints from the tactics and discipline of other countries, by which he might improve the army of the United States. He was cordially received in Europe. By invitation of Louis Philippe, he attended an anniversary celebration of the "Three Days," at which he had the rare opportunity of seeing 70,000 men march before him, in all the exercises of review; and he was subsequently a witness of the siege of Antwerp in Belgium.

On his return to the United States, Gen. Wool applied himself assiduously to the perfection of American tactics

as far as was consistent with his duties as inspector. In this he performed such efficient service, that on the breaking out of the present Mexican war, he was authorized by government to proceed to the West and organize for active duty the twelve-months volunteers of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, and Mississippi. This was a task of no little difficulty. None of these men had been in battle, and under the mere impulse of the moment they had flocked to the national standard, strangers to discipline or subordination, and expecting to be led immediately into battle. At the least delay, they became impatient, and even commenced loud murmurs against their officers. They were without tents, baggage, or proper arms or ammunition. Besides this, a tedious correspondence was to be sustained, not only with the different departments of government, but also with the governors of six states, and many military authorities. Yet all this was satisfactorily accomplished in six weeks; in which short time General Wool raised, organized, and equipped, more than 12,000 men. In that short time, he passed and re-passed through almost all the western states, visiting depots, and barracks, and superintending the organization of each company at its arrival. Part of the troops were sent on to General Taylor, prior to the storming of Monterey; and the remainder were collected into a separate command, to be called the Central Division, and destined to act in New Mexico.

About the middle of August, 1846, Wool arrived at San Antonio. Here his army of about 3,000 men was concentrated, and one column in readiness to march.

By great exertions, the general was soon enabled to put half his men in motion; leaving the remainder to be brought forward by Inspector-General Churchill, as soon as means of transportation and other indispensable supplies should arrive. In order to hasten the latter, he wrote for two hundred wagons and six hundred mules, to be shipped from New Orleans to Port Lavaca. On his arrival at that point, however, he found that nothing had been done for this purpose; and it was only by rigid economy in the arrangement of his actual supplies, that he was not detained there a full month.

On the 8th of October, he arrived at the Rio Grande, and crossed into Chihuahua on the 10th. In his march he received many civilities from the inhabitants; and the strict decorum of his army drew commendations even from the ill-disposed. On the 29th, he was at Monclovia, where he remained twenty-seven days, in consequence of the armistice subsequent to the capitulation of Monterey. On the 25th of November, after leaving two companies on the Rio Grande, and four to garrison Monclovia, he resumed his march toward the city of Chihuahua; but on his way he received notice from General Taylor, that the expedition against that city had been abandoned, and that he might take up a position at Parras. This he did on the 5th of December.

While in this position, Wool received orders to collect all the grain and flour that could be obtained, and forward them to the army of occupation. He had just entered upon this service, when notice reached him from Brigadier-General Worth, that Santa Anna was marching on Saltillo with a large force, and entreated

Wool to join Worth with his column, as that officer had but 900 effective men. Wool received this notice on the afternoon of the 17th of December, and in two hours his force was in motion, with its heavy train of 350 wagons, containing the ammunition, hospital stores, and sixty days' rations for the entire command. In four days they reached Agua Nueva, twenty-one miles in advance of Saltillo, having marched in that time 120 miles. At the same time, General Worth called for General Butler and his command. Meanwhile, Taylor was on his way to Victoria; but upon receiving notice from Worth that Santa Anna was approaching, he returned to Monterey. This multiplicity of movements caused a clashing of commands; the result of which was, that General Wool was deprived of what he regarded as essential to his efficiency in the field—his principal staff-officers, and all his wagons, ammunition, hospital-stores, and provisions, leaving him only his baggage train—in short, reducing him to the command of a simple brigade. He protested against this and appealed to General Taylor; after which Butler was ordered to Monterey, and Wool placed in command of all the troops in and near Saltillo; and his authority continued even after the arrival of General Taylor, who merely retained a small company in Saltillo.

Thus the toilsome march of General Wool was brought to an honorable conclusion. It had the most beneficial effect upon all engaged, enuring the volunteers to fatigue, habituating them to the climate, and preparing the way for that endurance which they manifested at the pass of Angostura, and among the plains, gorges, and

ravines of Buena Vista. They had encountered barren plains, sandy ridges, cypress swamps, hog-wallow prairies, rapid torrents, mountain gorges, intense heat, and clouds of dust; yet they gallantly moved on day after day, and week after week, with an order, fortitude, and celerity, which gave promise of efficient assistance upon the battle field.

The honor of the choice of battle ground is said to belong to General Wool. Colonel Hardin first noticed the superior advantages of the field at Buena Vista, and pointed them out to Wool long before the battle was fought; and although General Taylor preferred Agua Nueva, he yielded his own judgment to that of his brother officer. So says report.

At Buena Vista Wool was the officer of the day, and a large share of the victory is justly his due. In the beginning of the battle he was ordered to advance in the very front of the enemy, which he did in fine order, and was soon engaged with immense masses of infantry and cavalry. He animated his men by the most extraordinary exertions of both voice and example, flying from rank to rank, wherever peril most showed itself, entirely heedless of the storm of bullets that was raining around him. He was in the middle of that terrible conflict, when the 2d regiment of Kentucky volunteers under Clay, Fry, and McKee, received the order to advance. In every one of those emergencies, when the day seemed lost, his shrill voice could be heard, piercing through the uproar of battle, and encouraging the troops to one more effort. His services are represented by General Taylor as invaluable.

The distinguishing feature of General Wool's character, is his attention to order and discipline. This makes him a most valuable auxiliary in such an army as that of the United States, composed in a great measure of volunteers, from every portion of our immense territory. In some respects, however, this is carried too far; and a common complaint against him is on account of a harsh, overbearing deportment to both officers and men. This deprives him of the popularity which would be inspired by a noble suavity like that of Worth, or such a disinterested frankness as characterizes Taylor. This is unfortunate; being merely the excessive exercise of those rare qualities which make General Wool one of the ablest officers in the American service.

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#### THE KENTUCKIANS AT BUENA VISTA.

IN one of those dark moments, when the fortunes of Buena Vista seemed to be going against the Americans, McKee and Clay were detached with their Kentuckians, to resist the onset of the enemy. They sprung to the charge like eagles, marching over the most rugged and broken ground with the greatest celerity. They were watched by General Taylor with intense solicitude, for, should they retreat, the battle was lost. On they moved until they entered a valley broken up by masses of stone and deep ravines, and exposed to the fire of the enemy. All at once a strange commotion was observed

in their ranks. A hill concealed every thing but their heads from the general, and these were observed swaying hither and thither, and scattering as if in flight. The commander rose upon his horse and bent forward with deep excitement. A flight became more and more evident until he could no longer repress his emotion. Turning to his aid, Mr. Crittenden, who was standing near, he exclaimed with startling energy: "Is this conduct for Kentuckians?" The aid was silent, and the general again bent his anxious gaze upon the faithless regiment. Suddenly his features relaxed, and a flush of pleasure swept over his aged face—they had emerged from the valley in perfect order, each gallant leader in his place, and pushing onward to the battle. Silently and steadily they moved under the fire of the enemy, until within musket range, when one wide sheet of fire burst from their rifles, and the reeling ranks of Mexico announced that victory was once more with the Americans. At this sight the emotions of the general were too powerful to be controlled; and tears of exulting patriotism coursed down his cheeks.

But of those brave men that thus moved on to danger, under the deep determination to conquer, how many met death for the last time! The storm of that awful day passed by, and its thunder was hushed in the calmness of evening; but in every ledge, and by every stone, the mangled sons of Kentucky lay cold and stiff, in the dream that knows no waking. The young heart that had that morning bounded with patriotism at the sight of the enemy, was now spilling its blood where no friend would ever pause over its grave. In the last charge, man after

man fell before the Mexican cannon, until groups and masses lay piled upon each other over all the field. Colonel McKee fell pierced with a mortal wound, and was subsequently hacked and mutilated by the bayonets of the enemy. Lieutenant-Colonel Clay was wounded in the leg, and sat down to die. But his brave men rushed from their ranks, and bore him in their arms. The enemy saw it, and poured on, yelling like fiends. Unmindful of themselves, the sorrowing soldiers bore their beloved leader onward, until the road became so rugged that it was impossible for two to walk together. "Leave me, soldiers," exclaimed the dying youth, "and take care of yourselves." Still they bore on, until their burden lowered from their exhausted limbs, and with a gushing of deepest sorrow, they left him on the field. The next moment the Mexicans were by his side. But honor was yet too dear to him; raising himself on one arm he wielded his sword with a fury that for a moment held an army at bay. But at each motion the blood flowed faster from his wound, until he sunk exhausted. Then the enemy approached him, and a score of bayonets gritted together as they crossed in his lacerated frame.

## BUENA VISTA.

BY CAPTAIN ALBERT PIKE.

From the Rio Grande's waters to the icy capes of Maine  
Let all exult, for we have met the enemy again;  
Beneath their stern old mountains, we have met them in their  
pride,  
And rolled from Buena Vista back the battle's bloody tide;  
When the enemy came surging, like the Mississippi's flood,  
And the reaper, Death, was busy with his sickle red with blood.

Sant' Anna boasted loudly that before two hours were past,  
His lancers through Saltillo should pursue us thick and fast;  
On came his solid infantry, line marching after line;  
Lo! their great standards in the sun like sheets of silver shine!  
With thousands after thousands, yea, with more than ten to one,  
A forest of bright bayonets gleam fiercely in the sun.

Lo! Guanaguato's regiment! Lo! Puebla's boasted corps,  
And Guadalajara's chosen troops, all veterans tried before,  
And galloping upon the sight, four thousand lances gleam,  
Where, waving in the morning light, their blood-red pennons  
stream.

And there their stern artillery climbs up the broad plateau,  
To-day they mean to strike at us an overwhelming blow.

Now, hold on strongly to the heights, for lo! the mighty tide  
Comes thundering like an avalanche, deep, terrible, and wide:  
Now, Illinois, stand steady—Now, Kentucky, to their aid,  
For a portion of our waving line is broken and dismay'd;  
A regiment of fugitives are fleeing from the field,  
And the day is lost if Illinois and brave Kentucky yield!



One of O'Brien's guns is gone! on, on! their masses drift,  
 And their infantry and lancers now are passing to our left;  
 Our troops are driven from the hills, and flee in wild dismay,  
 And round us gather thick and dark the Mexican array.  
 Sant' Anna thinks the day is gain'd, and, riding yet more near,  
 Minon's dark cloud of lancers sternly menace now our rear.

Now, Lincoln, gallant gentleman! lies dead upon the field,  
 Who strove to stay those men that in the storm of bullets reeled;  
 Now, Washington, fire fast and true! fire, Sherman, fast and  
 far:

Lo! Bragg comes thundering to the front to breast the adverse  
 war;

Sant' Anna thinks the day is gain'd; on, on, his masses crowd,  
 And the din of battle rises up more terrible and loud.

Not yet! our brave old General comes—he will regain the day—  
 Kentucky, to the rescue! Mississippi, to the fray!  
 Now, charge, brave Illinoisans! and Davis drives the foe,  
 And back upon his rifles the red waves of lancers flow;  
 Upon them, yet once more, my braves! the avalanche is stay'd,  
 Back rolls the Mexique multitude, all broken and dismay'd.

Ho! May! to Buena Vista! for the enemy is near,  
 And we have none there who can stop their vehement career.  
 Still swelling, downward comes the tide—Porter and Yell are  
 slain;

Marshall before him drives a part, but still they charge in vain;  
 And now, in wild confusion mixed, pursuers and pursued,  
 On to Saltillo wildly drift, a frantic multitude.

Upon them, with your squadrons, May!—out leaps the flaming  
 steel,  
 Before his serried columns, how the frightened lancers reel;

They flee amain! now to the left, to stay their triumph there,  
 Or else the day is surely lost in horror and despair;  
 For their hosts are pouring swiftly on, like a river in the spring,  
 Our flank is turn'd, and on our left their cannon's thundering.

Now, brave artillery! bold dragoons! steady, my men, and calm,  
 Through rain, and hail, and thunder,\* now nerve each gallant  
 arm;

What though their shots fall round us here, still thicker than  
 the hail?

We'll stand against them, as the rock stands firm against the  
 gale:

Lo! their battery is silenced now! our iron hail still showers—  
 They falter, halt, retreat; Hurrah! the glorious day is ours!

Now, charge again, Sant' Anna! or the day is surely lost,  
 For back, like broken leaves, along our left your hordes are  
 toss'd—

Still louder roars his batteries, his strong reserve moves on;  
 More work is there before you, men, ere the good fight is won;  
 Now for your wives and children, men! stand steady yet once  
 more!

Now for your lives, your honor, fight, as you never fought  
 before.

Ho! Hardin breasts it bravely! McKee and Bissell there  
 Stand firm, before the storm of balls that fill the astonish'd air—  
 The lancers are upon them too, the foe stands ten to one—  
 Hardin is slain! McKee and Clay the last time see the sun;  
 And many another gallant heart in that last desperate fray  
 Grows cold, its last thoughts turning towards its loved ones far  
 away.

\* A portion of the day, during the battle, a hail storm swept over  
 the field, accompanied with thunder, lightning, and rain.

Still sullenly the cannon roar'd, but died away at last,  
 And o'er the dead and dying came the evening shadows fast ;  
 And then above the mountains, spread the cold moon's silvery  
 shield,

And patiently and pityingly look'd down upon the field ;  
 And careless of his wounded, and neglectful of his dead,  
 Despairingly and sullenly in the night the foeman fled.

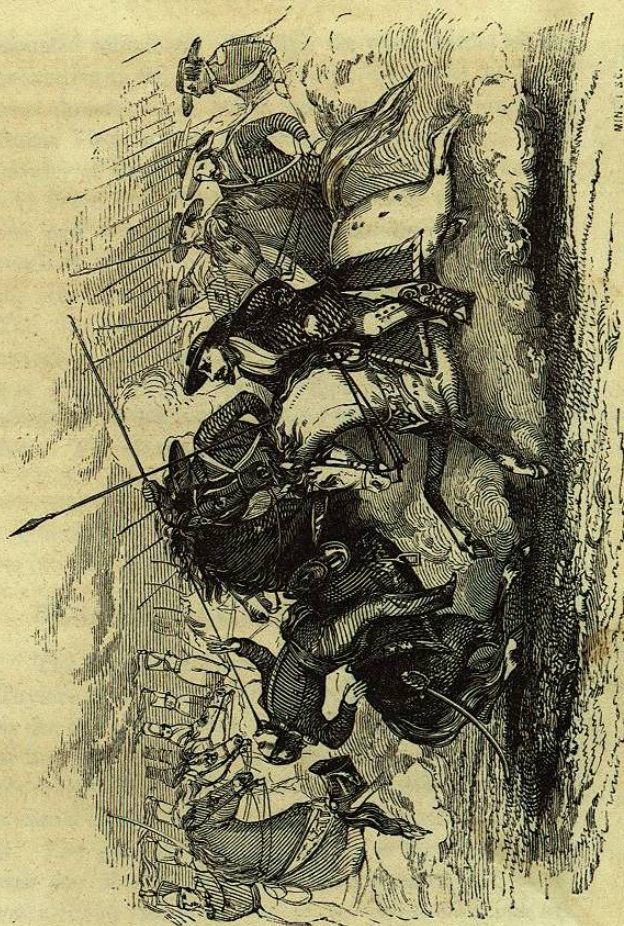
And thus on Buena Vista's heights a long day's work was  
 done,

And there our brave old General another battle won :  
 And still our glorious banner waves, unstained by flight or  
 shame,

And the Mexicans, among their hills, still tremble at our name.  
 So honor unto those who stood ! Disgrace to those that fled !  
 And everlasting glory to the brave and gallant dead.

#### THE DEATH OF COLONEL YELL.

THE loss of the Americans in officers, at the battle of Buena Vista, is a subject of sorrow and astonishment. *One-eighth of the slain were officers.* Many of these were young men—in the full flush of hope and ambition, and endeared to their country by their valuable services during long marches, and by their heroism on the fatal battle-field. One of these was Colonel Yell. He had accompanied General Wool in his march through New Mexico, and commanded the regiment of Arkansas



Death of Colonel Yell.