

After many narrow escapes from the enemy and starvation, and after losing his noble mare, Henrie arrived safely at our camp, and gave the first authentic intelligence of the capture of Majors Gaines and Borland's party.

CAPTURE OF TABASCO.

FROM THE GRAPHIC PEN OF AN "OFFICER OF THE NAVY."

Off Tabasco, June 22, 1847.

LONG ere this, you have no doubt received my letter giving an account of the Tuspan affair. Since then, this ship has been constantly on the move; in fact, nearly the whole squadron has been very actively employed since Commodore Perry took the command; he is at present *certainly the man for the navy*; in many respects, he is an astonishing man—the most industrious, hard-working, energetic, zealous, persevering officer, of his rank, in our navy; he does not spare himself, or *any one* under him. *This I like.* His great powers of endurance astonish every one. All know he is by no means a brilliant man; but his good common sense and judgment, his sociable manner to his officers—no *humbuggery*, no *mystery*—make him respected and esteemed.

When here a few weeks since with his squadron, for the purpose of filling up our water, he understood the Mexicans were making great preparations to *receive him*

at Tabasco, should he visit them. He could not then do so, as *I know* he was *obliged* to be at Vera Cruz with his squadron at a certain time on important business. He sent them word, however, that he would return in a few days and visit them; that his delay would give them more time to prepare for him. This notice they took advantage of to sink obstructions in the river, about five miles from the city, opposite which (the obstructions) they threw up a strong breastwork, concealed by the bushes and chapparal. Their fort near the city was also much improved, and mounted three 32-pounders and four field-pieces; it was built on a high hill, commanding completely the channel to the city as far as the guns could range. On the 12th and 13th inst., as if by magic, nearly all the squadron assembled here from various points on the coast. Where dull-sailing vessels were stationed, and had *bars* to cross on coming out of the rivers, steamers were sent to tow them. In this way the commodore concentrated his squadron with astonishing rapidity.

The commodore arrived in the "Mississippi" on the 13th, having stopped at the river Guasacualcos to despatch this ship and the Stromboli. I will give you some details, by way of showing the rapidity of his movements.

The day he arrived we were ordered by telegraphic signal to "report the number of officers, seamen, and marines prepared to land to-morrow." You must know that every ship had a brass *field-piece* on board, with a portion of the crew regularly trained to them, and the rest of the crew drilled as infantry, always ready for service, boats prepared, and *haversacks* for each man's

provisions, &c., &c. Orders were given to prepare a week's provisions. The next morning all were on the alert, and breakfasted as soon as the hammocks were stowed—not knowing at what moment the signal would be made to “disembark the troops.” As we expected, the steamers were soon ordered to tow over the bar the bomb-vessels Stromboli and Vesuvius, the brig Washington, gun-boat Boneta, and the schooner Spitfire, with Taylor's apparatus for lifting vessels over shoals, &c. When the steamers returned from this duty, the signal was made, “disembark the troops.” In a few minutes, nearly one thousand officers, seamen, and marines were in their boats astern of the different steamers—the Scorpion, Vixen, and Spitfire—the commodore leading in the Scorpion.

A more animated and lively scene, you cannot well imagine. Each ship had, in addition to her own boats, a large surf-boat, borrowed from the army at Vera Cruz, in which we built platforms, and placed on them our field-pieces. All the boats were provided with awnings; and officers and men, except the marines, lived in them. The marines were on board the steamers. After all had crossed the bar, each steamer, the Scourge included, (she was lying in the river, *not good for much*,) took certain vessels and boats in tow, and the expedition moved up the river against a strong current of four or five knots. It took us until the afternoon of the 15th to reach a point near which were the obstructions in the river.

At two points on our passage up, the enemy opened with musketry on the leading steamer (the Scorpion, with the commodore) and boats. The guns of all the large

vessels and the field-pieces were trained on the two shores as we advanced, and ready for service at a moment's warning. At these two points the commodore was informed the enemy would give him a volley; and at *their flash* our “great guns,” with canister and grape, poured it into them, which silenced them effectually. None on our side were hurt—several of the enemy killed and wounded, as we were told in Tabasco. The expedition arrived at the “Palms” about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. This is a point about five miles below Tabasco—a short distance from the obstructions in the river, and near which was the concealed breastwork. As it was too late to land, arrangements were made to land the army at daylight the next morning. About dark a volley of musketry was fired into one of the vessels, and a man's leg was broken—the only damage. Grape and canister silenced them also. At this time the vessels were lying within ten and twenty yards of a high bank covered with chapparal, bushes, &c., and the river at this point not more than 70 or 80 yards wide. So you may judge of our situation if the enemy had thought proper to annoy us; but the grape and canister from the “big guns” they could not stand. Several were killed by our shot at this point, although they could not be seen at the time. The next morning at early daylight the scene was again an animating one—one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed and participated in it. About 5 or 6 o'clock the commodore had two boats sounding for the obstructions, in charge of Lieutenants Alden and May. Just at this time a steamer had in tow the “Bonita,” towing her to a position above the *Palms*

—a point upon which there are seven beautiful palm trees—to assist in covering our landing, as it was supposed we would meet with resistance there. The steamer grounded, and the fact was reported to the commodore, who immediately remarked, “that gun-boat must be placed off the Palms.” The Germantown’s boats were ordered to perform this duty, and at the same time one of her boats landed to ascertain the best point for disembarking. The boats towing the gun-boat had proceeded very little above the Palms when they were joined by the boats sounding for the obstructions, as well as one or two other boats, when a volley of musketry was poured into them, wounding Lieutenant May very seriously in the right arm, breaking it below the elbow, and wounding also one or two of the Germantown’s slightly. The fire was instantly returned by the mortars, Rolando’s howitzer on the launch, and from the Bonita and Scourge. We heard no more of them, as they put off on horses “with despatch,” having several wounded. All the officers in the boats say it was a miracle that not more of our men were hurt, as the balls flew very thick. May, in a whale-boat, was nearest them, and thought there were about a hundred muskets fired. About this time our gallant leader gave the order “prepare to land;” and the marines and all hands being ready, he led the way in his barge, with his broad pennant flying. All eyes watched his movements as he pulled up the river. When opposite the Palms, he steered for the shore, and in his loud, clear voice, which was heard fore and aft the whole line, gave the order, “Land!—three cheers!” and three such cheers never before were heard—each boat striving

to be first to obey the order. Such spirit, such enthusiasm, I am confident, never was surpassed. The commodore’s boat was the first to strike the beach, and, I believe, he was the first to land. The shore was bold—close-to—and the bank from ten to twenty feet high. Imagine the *apparent* confusion of upwards of fifty boats, of all sizes, containing a thousand men, and ten pieces of artillery—all exerting themselves to be first on shore; and in less than ten minutes from the moment the order was given, *all* were on shore, and drawn up in order of battle. None who did not witness the exertions of the officers and men that day, in dragging those field-pieces out of the boats and up perpendicular banks ten or twenty feet high, can credit it. The banks giving way under them, large logs in their way, chapparal bushes, &c., were trifles to contend against, where such a spirit of perseverance prevailed. And now came “the tug of war.” Here we were, nearly eighty miles in the interior of an enemy’s country, on our way to capture a city containing from eight to ten thousand inhabitants; and, as report informed us, from two thousand to two thousand five hundred men under arms to oppose us, with strong entrenchments to pass, and a strong fort to take, before we could reach the city; the country unknown to us—through which we had to cut a road with our pioneers—no guide could be found to direct us. Such was our situation when the army was ready to move. Every officer and man knew that, before the *sun set*, a decisive blow would be struck; but no one doubted the result. We expected many lives would be lost, as a matter of course; but we *felt* and *knew* that, with Perry’s deter-

mined perseverance to conquer, defeat was out of the question. The order to march was given about 8 o'clock, and at 4 in the afternoon we entered the city of Tabasco, in a full run up some of the steep streets, with the artillery. That you may form some idea of the difficulties we had to encounter on the march, I will mention that we marched less than *ten miles*; to do this, we were eight hours on the road, which had to be cut and made by our pioneers under charge of Lieutenant Maynard, and the advance column of marines, under Captain Edson—through chapparal and high grass and reeds, frequently above their heads—the ground very uneven and full of holes—a vertical sun, and, in consequence of the grass being so high on either side of the road, we could not get a breath of air. It was distressing to witness so many gallant spirits, who, from the excessive heat, want of water, and over-exertion at the artillery, drop to the earth without a murmur. Such suffering never was witnessed. There were but two places on the route where we could get water from the river, which was then so muddy that you swallowed almost as much mud as water, and of course very warm. After a few hours' march, the road was strewed with the sick—gallant, noble fellows, falling completely exhausted. The medical corps, which was well organized, had their hands full; and their kindness and attention to the sick was just what the navy has always experienced at their hands. They were well provided with men with litters, to carry the wounded and sick—tents, medicines, &c.; but, before the march ended, additional men had to be detailed to assist them. Many of the officers carried canteens with liquor, and the mo-

ment they saw a poor fellow fall, they would give him a "drop of comfort," which had an astonishing effect on him. Two or three times on the route there was some skirmishing, but none of our men were hurt, but several of the enemy killed and wounded.

"As the steamers had orders to proceed up the river if they could pass the obstructions, they soon did so; and when we were within two or three miles of the city, we heard their 'great guns,' and knew they had passed the obstructions, and were engaged with the fort and city. Three cheers were given to the steamers, and our pace was increased. The firing was very rapid, and continued for some time. We thought they must have some hot work, and all were anxious to push on; but over such roads our speed could not be much increased. When the firing ceased, we were all anxiety to hear the result. We did not wait long, however; the news soon reached us 'that the fort and city were taken.' Just at this time the advanced guard saw the stars and stripes flying on the fort. Cheers, hearty cheers, passed along the line; but the *disappointment* of all hands you may imagine. *The field-pieces became a thousand pounds heavier at once.* You would have been amused to have heard the abuse heaped upon the 'bloody Mexicanos' by Jack: 'The bloody, cowardly rascals are not worth fighting, any how; they won't stand and be *licked like men*;' and various other remarks. Jack is certainly a queer compound.

"It appears that Smith Lee, commanding the Spitfire, was the first to pass the obstructions. He struck on them; but *a good head of steam* and a *determined will* to

pass, soon put him over them. He had in tow at the time the gun-boat Bonita and several boats. After he had opened the way, the Scorpion, Scourge, and Vixen followed.* Soon the Scorpion came up, fired, and passed on to the city. Porter (Lee's first lieutenant) landed, by Lee's order, took possession of the fort, and spiked the guns. He brought off two handsome field-pieces of brass. The Mexicans ran about the time Porter was pulling on shore: they took but one prisoner—a *fifer boy*. The city is still in our possession; and I believe it is the commodore's intention to hold it. The whole number of wounded on our side does not exceed a dozen—none killed. The foreigners in Tabasco say there were 1,800 men under arms. The fort could easily have destroyed our gallant little steamers. One shot passed through the Spitfire's wheel-house—no other damage. We have taken a large quantity of arms, ammunition, &c., &c. Van Brunt (with his bomb-vessel, Etna, with 70 marines) will be left as governor of Tabasco. The Spitfire also remains. The commodore is still in Tabasco, but is expected daily.

“Thus has ended an enterprise that must always reflect great credit on Commodore Perry. He is certainly the only man of his age and rank in the navy who would have undertaken it; no difficulties prevent his “going ahead.” During that march, he attended in person to all the arrangements; all orders emanated from him; and no man underwent more fatigue than himself; and

* The Scorpion having the advantage of superior speed, (from having no boats in tow,) passed ahead gallantly, and received and returned the opening fire of the forts. The Spitfire was next engaged.

after we entered the city, all the necessary precautions for holding it were made by him personally. You would not have supposed, from his appearance, that he had been taking more than an ordinary walk. The next morning he was quite fresh, and assured me he could take just such another walk that day. The *responsibilities* of the command of this squadron would kill one-half, at least, of our *old officers*. I do not know one of his rank who would have ordered four brigs to cross a bar where there is not water enough to *float* them. He ordered the Washington, Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius to ‘anchor inside the bar of Tabasco river.’ He knew what water *they* drew, and what water was on the *bar*; but it was the place of their commanders to get their vessels there. Of course they had to take every thing out of them but their guns and a little ammunition; after doing this, they were *forced over by steam*, striking quite hard on getting in and coming out. These are *trifles* with Perry, when there is an object to gain.

“I have spun you out quite a long yarn, something in a sailor's strain, because I thought a few details would amuse you. I have written in haste, as the Raritan may sail to-morrow, and I send this by her. The Albany also sails for home soon.

“The vessels of the squadron now here are, the Mississippi, Raritan, Albany, John Adams, Germantown, Decatur, brigs Etna, Vesuvius, Stromboli, Washington, schooner Bonita, and steamers Spitfire, Scorpion, Vixen, and Scourge.”

WAR.

Ho! ho!—fling out our starry flag unto the sunny sky!
 Let sound the bugle and the drum with stirring notes and high!
 Grasp now the slumbering musket, and harness on the sword,
 And stand erect and ready, for our country's voice is heard!

She calls unto her honest sons to claim redress for wrong;
 To wipe away the insults deep, which they have borne too
 long:—

She asks them in the name of Right, to hasten at her call,
 And for the cause of Justice, to conquer or to fall!

The Mexican hath pressed our soil—his hand hath shed the
 blood

Of brave and gallant bosoms—and fiend-like he hath stood,
 Gloating with all a murderer's joy, as his poor victims lay
 Unburied on the desert shore—the loathsome vulture's prey!

The MEXICAN!—where is the heart so dead to pride and shame,
 As not to feel a patriot's scorn at mention of that name?
 A name that wakes the memory of wrongs too long endur'd—
 Of countless crimes, which call aloud for the avenging sword.

Then, ho! shout out the battle-cry!—draw forth the glittering
 brand!

And from the soil of freemen expel the invading band!—
 Our cause is just and righteous—meet it with dauntless brow—
 And may there be no recreant soul to fail or falter now.

Washington, May, 1846.

THE BATTLE OF HUAJUTLA.

Tampico, Mexico, July 18, 1847.

“CONSIDERABLE excitement has existed in this city for the past two weeks, in relation to the detention, by General Garay, at the town of Guautla, (pronounced Wahoutla,) 140 miles from here, of one hundred and eighty Americans, who were recently liberated in the city of Mexico, and sent toward this city with a small escort. They are those who were taken last February at Encarnacion. The renowned General Garay, in true Mexican style, pretended that their passports were not correct, and that he would be under the necessity of detaining them at Guautla, until he could hear from his government.

“Six of them made their escape, and arrived in safety in this city, and immediately communicated the above facts to our governor, Col. Gates.

“An expedition was fitted out on the 8th inst., by order of Col. Gates, and the command of it given to Col. De Russey, of the Louisiana regiment. The expedition consisted of one hundred and twenty men, and one six-pound field-piece; forty men, third artillery, commanded by Capt. Wyse; forty dragoons, mounted on untrained mustang horses, and commanded by Captain Boyd and Lieutenant Tonnehill, late of the Baltimore battalion; and forty mounted men from the Louisiana regiment, commanded by Captains Mace and Seguine. Lieutenants Lindemberger, Campbell, and Heimberger, of the Louisiana regiment, accompanied the expedition, to act in such capacities as might be required.

"Their march for four days was uninterrupted, passing through the towns of Puebla-Viejs, Tampico-Alto Ozuama, and Tantayoca, in all of which the people made professions of friendship, and had got within seven miles of Guautla, eight miles beyond the last-mentioned town, and one mile from Rio Calabasa. Here the colonel met an Indian, who informed him that a large force of Mexicans, under the command of Garay, had heard of his approach, and was in ambush on both sides of the river. Col. De Russey immediately despatched Lieut. Lindenburger, acting adjutant, with an order to halt the column (advanced guard) under command of Capt. Boyd. The captain had halted at the river for the purpose of watering his horses, and while in that act, he received a destructive fire from an unseen enemy. As I said before, the horses were all mustangs, and at the report of the musketry they became unmanageable, threw most of the riders, and created great confusion. Capt. Boyd dashed across the river, followed by his lieutenant and six men. In crossing, the captain was shot in the head, and died on reaching the opposite shore. Three of the men were also killed. All this took place before Lieut. Lindenburger reached him. The remainder succeeded in crossing the river, and joined the main body. Thus fell one of the bravest and finest men that ever lived.

"On hearing the report of musketry from the opposite bank of the river, the Mexicans concealed on this side commenced firing on the main body of the expedition from every side, when Capt. Wyse came gallantly into action with his field-piece, and opened a destructive fire on the enemy with grape and canister. At the same

time Capts. Mace and Seguire charged the enemy on the right and left in the most spirited manner. The battle now raged with great fury on both sides for an hour, when the Mexicans sounded a retreat, at least that portion of them in front.

"The colonel now discovered a large body of lancers approaching him in the rear, but before he succeeded in getting within reach of them, they captured a portion of the pack mules, and then took to their heels.

"During the engagement Lieut. Tonnehill was mortally wounded, a ball passing through his thigh and breaking the bone. The six men at the cannon were all severely wounded. Three bullets passed through Col. De Russey's coat, and as many through Capt. Wyse's. Capt. Mace was struck twice with spent balls, but not hurt.

"After the engagement, to the astonishment of all, only one round shot and one charge of canister was left for the gun, when, our troops having fired away the greater part of their ammunition, it was deemed prudent to fall back on Tantayoca, which was accordingly done.

"The road from the river to Tantayoca lay through a narrow defile, the summits of the mountains nearly hanging over the heads of the men as they passed through it. The deep and precipitous sides were covered with a dense chapparal from base to top. Here the enemy rallied, and, concealing themselves from view, poured a destructive fire down upon our gallant little band, which, from the nature of the ground, they were unable to return.

"On approaching Tantayoca, in which they had encamped the previous night, and from which they had started peaceably that morning, our men found, to their surprise, that the plaza, church, and streets, were crowded with lancers and other troops. They marched up boldly to the enemy, until they got within a few hundred yards of the plaza, when they opened to the right and left, and gave Captain Wyse an opportunity to discharge his last round shot. It did some execution, killing and wounding some three or four, and also making a tremendous hole in the walls of the church. Colonel De Russy, with Captain Seguine, at the same time made a charge up the street, when the Mexicans, for the second time, took to their heels, returning only a few scattering shots. The lowest estimate I have heard made of the number of Mexicans engaged in this affair was 1000. Some say as many as 2000 or 3000. Our troops now took possession of the town, and encamped on the same ground they had occupied the previous night, (Sunday the 11th inst.)

"A detachment was now sent through the town to search for ammunition; and they succeeded in finding enough to make five rounds of canister, which at this time was an invaluable prize.

"A number of the men, contrary to orders, broke open both stores and houses, and helped themselves to every thing valuable they could lay their hands on; and foremost among them, were the Mexican muleteers who accompanied the colonel. They appeared to be old hands at the business.

"After our troops encamped, they could see large

bodies of the enemy moving to the rear of them, for the purpose of cutting off their farther retreat; but both men and horses were so exhausted, that it was determined to remain in their present position for a short time to rest.

"Near dark, General Garay's aid-de-camp and a major of the staff, came near Colonel De Russy's camp, with a flag of truce. The colonel did not allow them to enter his camp, but met them a short distance outside of it. The colonel was accompanied by Captain Wyse. The aid handed the colonel a letter. The colonel told him, in substance, 'that it was too dark to read it, and that he had no candles or light, probably he, the aid, could tell him the purport of it.' The aid (who spoke English fluently) replied, 'that it was a summons for an unconditional surrender, as General Garay had sufficient men and means to conquer him, and he wished to spare an effusion of blood.' Colonel De Russy immediately returned the letter, unopened, to the aid; and he told him to 'tell General Garay that the idea of surrender had never entered his mind, and he therefore declined any correspondence on that subject'—when the aid and major, after the usual compliments, retired.

"Col. De Russy now ordered camp-fires to be made, and all the horses to be unsaddled; and every thing had the appearance, to the Mexicans, of his remaining there all night. In this, however, they were deceived; for the colonel took up his line of march at 2 o'clock, A. M., during one of the heaviest rain-storms ever experienced, and passed silently through the city. They took the road for Penuca, passing in a contrary direction to the

one he had come by, and on which Garay was encamped, and was ten miles from Tantayoca when daylight overtook him.

"At 10 o'clock, A. M., the lancers and guerillas again came in sight, and hung in the rear of the detachment all day, spearing and shooting down, without mercy, such unfortunate persons as straggled off from the main body. On one occasion, a large body of lancers collected in a group, when Captain Wyse gave them a salute with a charge of canister, and made great havoc among both horses and riders, killing and wounding about thirty men; and from that time they kept at a respectful distance.

"The Mexicans followed our little detachment for two days, occasionally exchanging a few shots. Lieutenant Heimberger was shot in the arm during the retreat the first day. When Colonel De Russy got within fifteen miles of Penuca, he despatched Mr. George Lefler, an old citizen of this place, to Colonel Gates, giving him an account of his position, and informing him of their being entirely out of ammunition, and a large body of the enemy in his rear.

"Colonel Gates immediately despatched Lieutenant-Colonel Marks to his relief with 160 men, two pieces of cannon, and plenty of ammunition. Lieutenant-Colonel Marks went to Penuca with his command per steamboat, where he met Colonel De Russy and his command, completely tired out, and almost without a cartridge. As there was an attack anticipated the following night on this place, both parties returned.

"Thus ended one of the most brilliant affairs, for the

numbers engaged in it, (terminating with a masterly retreat,) which have taken place during this war.

"Our loss on the occasion was about thirty killed, wounded, and missing; while that of the Mexicans is set down at 150 killed and wounded."

A SOLDIER'S LETTER TO HIS MOTHER.

Engineer Camp, near Vera Cruz, April 2d, 1847.

I FIND, my dear mother, that there is more truth than poetry in the old saying, "there's no rest for the wicked," for I have had about as much as I could attend to on my hands, ever since this kennel capitulated. On the morning after I wrote the letter to father, the garrison marched out, with music playing and colors flying—they then stacked their arms and colors, and "vamossed the ranch."—On the southern side of the city, there is a long narrow lagoon, running nearly north and south; around this, and between it and the city, is a large level meadow. It was here that the ceremony took place. They issued from the gate of Mercy to the tune of that infernal old "che-wang-a-wang, che-wang-a-wang," which may well be called "the tune the old cow died of,"—halted on this meadow, between our troops, who were drawn up in two lines, one on each side of the meadow, and about 400 yards apart. At a signal, they laid down their arms and accoutrements, filed out, and marched on towards Alvarado, our troops presenting arms as they marched by. I took such a position that they passed within ten