

they would find a hook, though small, yet, if skilfully managed, would hold and *land* them. That we could conquer Arista to-morrow, none doubts; but it would be after a bloody battle and great loss of life. Not many historians would be left to tell the tale.

General Taylor arrived from St. Joseph's Island on the 15th of August. The 7th Infantry is ordered to join us.

This land of Texas is celebrated for many things; in fact, for almost every thing but the refinements of society. Among those characters who have gained a reputation that can only die with the history of horse-thieves and abominable rascals, the name of Garner stands conspicuous. He was one of the most notorious rascals in the country. He held at one time the honorable station of high private in the army of Texas. Feeling discontented with his position, and believing his light was hidden under a bushel, or that he would become rusty in the art of horse-stealing, he deserted. Apprehension, trial, and condemnation followed. He was sentenced to be shot. On the day appointed for his execution General Houston was present. The prisoner knelt with perfect composure upon his coffin, before which was the grave. He requested permission not to have his eyes blinded; that he was not afraid to look death in the face. The ceremony proceeded, the command, "ready! aim!" was given, when General Houston reprieved him. Garner rose from his coffin, and, with perfect effrontery and sang-froid, approached the general, and exclaimed, "*Fun's fun, general, but I'll be — if this is not carrying a joke a little too far;*" and then added, "If you had shot me you would have lost the best man in your army!"

CHAPTER V

Nothing of great importance occurred between the 16th and 25th of August. The traders drove a brisk business in mustang horse-flesh; many of the officers supplied themselves, but at prices nearly fifty per cent. higher than the usual rate. As regards color and gait, nearly all could be suited. The best look as if they had lost all the fire they possessed in a state of nature. Their look is one of regret, as if they were dwelling upon the glories of untrammelled motion on the boundless plains. The entrenchments were pushed on vigorously. Some cannon were borrowed from Colonel Kinney, and placed in position, to give us a more *terrific* appearance. I question whether they were not more dangerous to ourselves than the enemy. The general ordered all operations to cease upon it, feeling convinced, from the position, it could afford us very little protection. The work has been of some service, as it has given us a practical knowledge of the manner of hastily throwing up a temporary defense. The steamer Undine was discharged, and a poor, miserable wreck of a boat, called the Dayton, took its place. The Dragoons have been heard from at San Antonio, and were to leave for San Patricio on the 21st. Had a visit from two Lipan chiefs. They were magnificent specimens of the Indian race; tall, huge frames, with muscles well developed, and with open, fearless countenances, they appeared, in every particular, warriors of the desert. Their usual array is very simple and curious. Their saddle is a simple tree, primitive enough in its construction, from which it would be very diffi-

cult to be thrown. Their arms are the bow and arrow, and tomahawk; the bow is made of mesquite, covered with the skin of some animal, to which is attached a pouch for their arrows, the whole decorated with beads. General Taylor and staff left on the 23d for San Patricio, to meet the Dragoons. On the 24th we were visited by a terrific thunder-storm, accompanied by torrents of rain. Lieutenant Bragg had one of his negro boys killed instantaneously, and another badly injured, by lightning. The crash was tremendous, and was felt throughout the camp. My arm was shocked as severely as if I had received a discharge of electricity from a heavily-laden battery, and the whole air was impregnated with a smell of sulphur. A child was born at the height of the storm, and should certainly be christened "*Thunder*." A few more such storms, and feather-beds will be in demand. They are perfectly *awful*—take your breath away, and make you sit bolt upright in your chair, feet on the rung, as if your life depended upon it.

General Taylor returned on the 25th. His meeting with the Dragoons was somewhat singular. The heavy thunder we had on the 24th was taken by them for the distant rumbling of cannon. They felt assured we were attacked. "To horse!" was sounded. Men who before were on the sick report found themselves by their horses' sides, and they all gallantly dashed in and swam the Nueces. When they met the general, they were marching by squadrons, with the full belief we were engaged with the enemy. Their promptness and gallant passage of the river in the saddle reflect great credit upon them. The 2d Dragoons arrived at San Patricio, a small village on the Nueces River, on the 23d of August. They accomplished this fatiguing

march in the heat of summer, with horses perfectly unacclimated, in thirty days. They are in fine health and spirits, and will join us in a few days.

August 25th. The arrival of Lieutenant Ringgold, with dispatches from Washington to General Taylor, threw the whole camp into a fever, and prevented any thing like going to bed until the small hours. What is to pay? The 5th and 8th Regiments of Infantry, and four companies of flying artillery, are ordered here forthwith! The 5th concentrate at Jefferson Barracks. The news received at Washington from Mexico has caused the greatest alarm as regards our fate. The impression at Washington was, that we were in the most critical position, and that it was questionable whether any troops could be found to re-enforce us. If they really had advices of a warlike nature, of which we at the time had none, save the Mexican bombastic paper threats, there might have been a little mental suffering when they calmly reflected upon our destitute condition, and how insignificant was our force if there was the remotest probability of a conflict with Mexico. If reports could have reached the north on the 6th of August which could have led them to believe the Mexicans had invaded the country with so large a force as to have *demolished* us, what will they think upon the reception of General Herrera's war message to the Mexican Congress, which did not reach New Orleans until the 7th? *Then* they will have us *buried*. Despite all these alarms, we are ready for any thing that may occur—never felt our oats better.

Up to this date there is nothing new from Mexico. Our information of movements is accurate, and can be relied upon. There is no force of any amount, *as yet*, collected. General Arista is still at Monterey. Last

reports from Matamoras make out one thousand five hundred troops there. A declaration of war was constantly looked for by the people. I do not know how they can well avoid it, but I do not believe a mother's son of them will cross the Rio Grande. Many differ with me in opinion—*nous verrons*. If there is a declaration, it may well have been brought forth by the knowledge of the paltry number of troops at present here. A respectable force would have overawed them.

The steam-ship Alabama arrived to-day with five companies of the 7th Infantry, under command of Major Brown, and two companies of Volunteer Artillery, with their battery and horses, under the command of Major Gally. These companies were called out by Major-general Gaines. The citizens of New Orleans were under great apprehensions for our safety. That patriotic city, composed of citizen-soldiers, is ever ready and foremost to take up arms and fly to fight the battles of her country. Long may she be renowned for it, and receive all the credit that is due such patriotic impulses and prompt action.

Two companies of the 4th Infantry arrived to-day, in the barque "William Ivy." They are commanded by Major Graham, and were last stationed at Fort Scott, Missouri.

When all the troops arrive at present under orders for this place, the "Army of Occupation" will consist of 2d Dragoons, five companies of Artillery, 3d, 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th Regiments of Infantry, making an aggregate of three thousand men. That will be quite a respectable show; and when well supplied with all the munitions of war, from a bullet to a bomb, from a musket to a siege-piece, will be quite a dangerous crowd to fall in with.

Colonel Twiggs, with his Regiment of Dragoons, arrived on the 27th. Three companies of the 7th arrived on the 28th. From this date drills were the order of the day. A depôt was formed on the beach, directly behind the line of intrenchments, of which I have previously spoken, and great activity prevailed in the attempt to purchase mules and cattle for transportation of the army in case of an emergency.

The spy, Chapita, returned from Matamoras on the 6th of September. He reports no warlike preparations, and that the two thousand men at Matamoras have again *dwindled* to five hundred. He says the people in that vicinity are opposed to the war.

An additional force is ordered here; it is taken from the artillery regiments, so that each shall have four companies in the field, in all sixteen companies. The three companies of the 2d Dragoons, marched from Fort Washita under the command of Major Beall, are to be stationed at San Antonio and Austin.

September 12th. This afternoon Lieutenant Graham, of the 4th Infantry, arrived in camp badly scalded, and reported that the steam-boat Dayton had burst her boilers, killing Lieutenants Higgins and Berry, of the 4th, and some others, and scalding many in the most shocking manner. The Dayton left in the morning for St. Joseph's Island, having on board Captain Crossman, Lieutenants Graham, Higgins, Berry, and Woods, of the 4th, Lieutenant Gordon, of the 3d, and Doctor Crittenden. Besides these there were several soldiers and citizens. At twenty minutes past twelve M., being opposite Maglone's Bluff, she burst her boilers, scattering death and destruction on every side. Lieutenant Higgins, just before the explosion, was sitting talking to Doctor Crittenden, and Lieutenants Berry

and Woods were lying down near them, the former asleep, all being in the small cabin aft the social hall. Captain Crosman, Lieutenants Graham and Gordon, with many others, were standing on the boiler-deck. Lieutenant Higgins was killed immediately by a piece of iron striking him on the head; Doctor Crittenden and Lieutenant Woods escaped any material injury; Lieutenant Berry was killed; all on the boiler-deck were blown high into the air, and were thrown into the water some distance from the boat. Lieutenant Gordon was uninjured, Captain Crosman very slightly, and Lieutenant Graham very badly. There were eight killed and seventeen wounded. The scene baffles description. After the first boiler burst, the second was thrown into the water, and exploded with a crash like thunder, throwing volumes of water high in air. The water was quite deep; the poor, mangled fellows lay clinging to pieces of the wreck, until, fortunately, they were all picked up by the yawl, which was energetically employed under the immediate direction of Lieutenant Gordon. The wounded were brought up this evening. As they were landed, it was horrible in the extreme to look at them; some with nearly all the flesh off; one with his leg broken; and all more or less mutilated; some perfectly blackened; and one negro not only scalded, but his flesh *burned to a crisp*. Every aid that experienced and talented medical officers could render was freely and promptly given. The general hospital was placed at the disposal of all, soldiers and citizens. The amount of terrible suffering that is going on within its walls would rend the heart of the most indifferent. The boat is a complete wreck, literally blown to atoms. It was an old hulk of a thing, totally unfit to carry passengers. It was

our only choice in the absence of proper transportation. In an evil hour she was chartered, and was the means of sending eight souls, and possibly more, into eternity. Lieutenant Berry's body was recovered.

The fate of poor Higgins is particularly melancholy and sad. He married Captain M.'s daughter last July, and separated from her two weeks after their marriage, to join his company, then on its way to this place. Theirs had been an attachment of many years; it was a marriage of a day. The spring of their love had hardly opened, when the frost of death deprived it of its bloom, without deigning to grant it the existence of a summer.

Poor Berry! the amiable, the mild, the pure, whose heart knew no guile, shall we never see you more? To die, too, ye gallant souls, so miserable a death! one from which your relatives can draw no consolation! Had it been on the field of battle, after a hard-fought and well-earned day, a battle for liberty and your country, there would have been a secret satisfaction and pride in yielding up thy warm spirits; but to die the death of a dog, from the carelessness of others, is too, too bad! May the God of Battles receive and cherish them, and carry the consolation so necessary to the hearts of their bereaved friends and relatives. They were buried on the 13th, with appropriate military honors. From some unavoidable delay, the procession did not take up its line of march until after sunset. It was a solemn, sad march; and the circumstances and the time rendered it very impressive. The sun had just set; the clouds, piled up in pyramids, were tinged with golden light; flashes of lightning were seen in the north; the pale moon, in the east, was smiling sweetly forth, seemingly regardless of the sad feelings

of those in that solemn funeral procession. They were buried about half a mile from camp, on the top of a beautiful bluff, commanding an extensive and picturesque view. The service of the dead was read by the light of a lamp. Three volleys were fired over their graves. The escort wheeled into column, and, to a lively air from fife and drum, we left the soldiers to their long sleep, and their dreary but romantic graves.

CHAPTER VI.

BETWEEN the 13th and 24th of September the following companies of United States troops arrived, viz.: General Worth, with six companies of the 8th Infantry; Major Ringgold, with his company of Horse Artillery; two companies of the 8th, under Captain Ogden; also, Lieutenant Duncan's company and battery. His horses have suffered very much, he having lost fourteen. Add to these Captain Burke's command (artillery), and five companies of the 5th Infantry, under Captain Smith. These latter-named troops have made a prompt and exceedingly rapid movement; they traveled *two thousand five hundred miles in twenty-one days*. Detroit was their starting-point; thence across to the Ohio River by canal; down the Ohio and Mississippi in steam-boats to New Orleans, and by the steam-ship Alabama to Aransas Bay.

A movement of this kind brings into bold relief our grand system of internal navigation, which, in connection with our rivers, enables the government, in an incredibly short period, to send troops from one extremity of the Union to the other.

A company of Texans are to be mustered into the service at each of the following places: Victoria, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Austin.

The son of an alcalde of one of the towns across the Rio Grande came over and proposed to furnish the army with fresh beef. That is very indicative of war—against beeves! In the States the cry is war! war! war! With the Mexicans it is beef! beef! beef! Their cry is decidedly the most sensible.

On the 29th Doctor Hawkins arrived, with his amiable lady. She designs making camp her home.

October 13th. It is generally believed there will be a movement to the Rio Grande in a short time. A large proportion of the force constituting the "Army of Occupation" has arrived. The morning report of to-day gives the following as the strength of the command: two hundred and fifty-one officers, three thousand six hundred and seventy-one rank and file; grand aggregate, three thousand nine hundred and twenty-two. These are on the coast. The three companies of Dragoons in the interior number about one hundred and fifty. The following is the distribution of the forces: The 1st Brigade is on the right; it is composed of the 8th Infantry and twelve companies of Artillery, the whole commanded by Brevet Brigadier-general Worth. Next comes the Dragoons, commanded by General Twiggs. Then the 2d Brigade, composed of the 5th and 7th Regiments of Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel McIntosh. Then a command of four companies of Horse Artillery, under Major Erving. Then the third Brigade, composed of the 3d and 4th Infantry, commanded by Colonel Whistler; and then two companies of Volunteer Artillery, under the command of Major Gally.

Of late we hear very little talk of war. The time not spent in drilling is actively employed in riding, fishing, and hunting.

Colonel Payne has been appointed inspector-general for the "Army of Occupation." He reviewed the different brigades on the 15th and 16th. The display was quite creditable; and we all felt that a more efficient army, for its size, was never brought into the field.

A party of five officers left on the 23d for a three days' hunt upon the Nueces. We were completely equipped in every respect. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the weather, the sweet, charming scenery, and the buoyancy of all. It is no little relief to escape for a few days from the everlasting sound of the fife and drum. We all lay claim to a good share of patriotism, and are exceedingly ambitious of drilling; but, then, "too much of a good thing is good for nothing." No one but the most irreclaimable cynic could have ridden over the beautiful country in the vicinity of the Nueces without being enchanted with its beauty. The grass is of a rich pea-green; the "mots" of timber, with their deep black-green, scattered about in picturesque confusion; the rolling prairie, and the level plain, and the sweet Nueces, coursing its quiet way, as if through a green meadow, presented a picture of which the eye could never tire, and to transmit which would require the pencil of a Loraine in his happiest mood. There are some sites for building which surpass, in quiet, pastoral loveliness, any I have ever seen. Our party was made of the right stuff; good men and true; ready for any emergency; and were each on the *qui vive* for tiger or panther. We were gratified in killing one of the latter gentlemen. The second day we had all returned to camp for some grub except D., when we

saw him coming on horseback with (as we supposed) a deer behind him. To our joy, instead of a deer, he threw down an enormous panther. "Well done, D.!" was the involuntary exclamation. "Where did you kill him?" "Under what circumstances?" "Easy, my boys; just hold your horses; I'll tell you; but just tip me some grog, for I am rather used up. Well, I shot a *busting* big buck, and saw it fall, about a hundred yards from me, in a 'mot.' Knowing when 'Old King Death' (name of his rifle) sends a ball that it is all up with any thing it hits, I gave myself no uneasiness about the buck, and was crawling upon another, when I heard the greatest fuss and growling where the buck fell, and concluded the wolves must have got it. I ran up, and got within six feet before I saw the cause of all this confusion; when, simultaneously with my sight, with a sharp, cat-growl, and desperate leap, a panther sprang at me. I had barely time to fall back a few feet, when he brushed past me in full leap, just missing my person, lighting on the ground about twenty feet from me. He instantly turned toward me, and prepared, with teeth shown, tail on his back, and death in his eye, to make another spring at me. I drew up 'King Death,' saying, 'It is you or I, old fellow,' cracked away, and shot him through the center of the forehead, a little lower than the eyes. He fell, and, with some desperate struggles, died, relieving me from rather an unpleasant predicament." "Good, old fellow! bring out that bottle of Cozzens's old brandy; none but the best to drink to the panther-killer." It certainly was a dangerous, most fearfully dangerous situation. D.'s coolness, daring, and ready command of nerve saved his life. The animal weighed one hundred and sixty pounds, was seven feet eight inches from tip to tip,

and four feet high. The spotted tigers are terrible animals, and the fiercest hunting-dogs cower at their approach. Colonel C., of Texas, told me that, on the Bernard River, while hunting coons with a friend, the dogs treed, in an immense live-oak, something over which they made an unusual commotion. Being the youngest, it was his fate to climb the tree, and get, as they thought, the coon down. The tree was directly on the river bank, and its horizontal branches reached nearly across. The trees are no *saplings* in that section of country, the live-oaks especially; for they *do* say that under the shade of some *five hundred persons could dine*. If they could have had these trees in the sylvan times in merry England, what dances the good people could have had under them! But to return. He climbed the tree, and crawling out on one of these horizontal limbs, expecting every moment to see the coon, what should present itself, upon rising up to look round, but an *immense spotted tiger*, with eyes "like balls of fire." What to do was the question. He could not back out; he dared not drop into the river, for it was full of alligators. He fell upon this plan: *swung himself below the limb, and hung on by his hands!* The tiger walked over him, descended the tree, and went through a crowd of nine dogs, as fierce ones as there were in Texas, who never even growled at him.

Our hunting was entirely *still* hunting; the ground will not admit of any driving; the deer have no regular runs. At the point where we encamped our hunting was confined to a strip of mesquite chaparral, about twelve miles long and two or three broad, running parallel with the Nueces. The deer are attracted to it by their fondness of the bean of that tree. The number of deer is incredible. Passing through the chaparral,

you come to the bald prairie, in which you find hundreds in a drove. In the prairie they are only a curiosity for their numbers; the hunter has no chance; for it is impossible to crawl upon them, and still more impossible to run them down, as the ground, in places, is so mellow that the horse sinks in above his knees, which would make the chase very dangerous both to horse and rider. Our most exciting sport was shooting wild geese. Every morning they fly from the prairie to the salt marshes, and return in the evening. Stationing ourselves on one of the innumerable bluffs, we knocked them over right and left. Two of the mornings proving very foggy, and the geese flying very low, we slaughtered them out and out. Job was heard a quarter of a mile from camp, cracking away as fast as he could load. "Bang! bang! how Job is giving it to them!" Presently he made his appearance, without any geese, and as he came in we all cried out, "Why, what luck? you have been firing away as if you were protecting yourself from being knocked down by them! we never heard such a firing!" "Firing away! yes, you're a pretty set of fellows; here I have been hallooing as loud as I could, and getting no answer. I took to firing off my piece—regular distress-guns; and now you tell me I was having tip-top sport! I was completely lost! and not knowing how far I was from camp, I have hung up five geese, and shall never find them." We had a hearty laugh at the "lost one." Two of the geese were afterward found, but the buzzards had appropriated to themselves the rest. Lieutenant R., separating from his pony to kill a deer, after butchering it was unable to find his horse, as it was dark, and arrived in camp on foot; on his way he killed some geese, and hung them up to guide him back in

the morning. The next morning he found his pony and deer. It is not every where you can find your way to a lost horse by *leaving your game along the road*. We reached camp on the evening of the third day. Return of killed, ten deer, fifty-one geese, four bittern, two sand-hill crane, sixty-nine snipe, eighteen ducks, four curlew, three turkeys, and one panther.

This is a specimen of the success of the many hunting parties who frequently went off for several days, and will give some idea of the abundance and variety of the game.

CHAPTER VII.

NOVEMBER 1st. The time for which Major Gally's battalion of volunteers were called out having expired, the general has decided upon sending them home. They have conducted themselves with great propriety, and have been indefatigable in their drill. At ten o'clock A.M. they gave the camp a farewell salute. On the 4th they embarked, and were saluted in return.

One can hardly realize that the Corpus Christi before us now is the settlement of scattering houses we saw upon our landing. At the end of November its population was computed at one thousand. The majority of them are grocery keepers and gamblers, who have come here to feed upon the army. Houses appear to have grown in a night. There are all sorts, from a frame covered (from the want of lumber or cash, or both) with common domestic, to a tolerably respectable one, clapboarded and shingled. A theater, of no inconsiderable dimensions, is about being erected,

and a company of actors are anxiously awaiting its completion.

During the latter part of November and the month of December we had the most shocking weather imaginable; either cold "northers" or drenching rains, without intermission. Hast thou, dear reader, ever *felt* a norther? heard tell of one? No. Well, your northern cold is nothing to it. It comes "like a thief in the night," and all but steals your life. You go to bed, weather sultry and warm, bed-clothes disagreeable, tent open; before morning you hear a distant rumbling; the roaring increases—the *norther* comes. For several minutes you hear it careering in its wild course; when it reaches you it issues fresh from the snow-mountains, and with a severity which threatens to prostrate the camp. The change in one's feelings is like an instantaneous transit from the torrid to the frigid zone; blankets are in demand, and no one thinks of living without a good supply on hand. Ice has formed in pails several times, and one morning every tent had an ice covering; the sleet had frozen upon it, and the crackling of the canvas sounded like any thing but music. We were forced to throw up embankments and plant chaparral to the north of our tents, to break the wind. The men, of course, suffer a great deal. The constant dampness and bad water have produced many serious cases of dysentery. The beauty of this climate is decidedly in the summer. I'll venture to say there is no part of the United States cursed with such a variable one in the winter. Oh! Texas, if we have not "fought, bled, and died" for you, we have done as Dick Riker (peace to his ashes) did, "suffered some."

Our encampment presented quite a picturesque ap-