

fate, have cast a gloom over the camp. He was esteemed an excellent officer, one of more than ordinary attainments, and stood deservedly high in his profession. He was a high-minded, chivalric gentleman.

April 14th. The train arrived without being attacked, and Captain Thornton returned reporting no signs of the enemy. At Matamoras every thing has been unusually quiet; hardly any citizens, and but few workmen, made their appearance; there was a solemn silence reigning over the whole city: it appeared to be deserted. It was impossible to explain it. It is now considered very unsafe to leave camp to go any distance.

The land in this vicinity is cultivated to some extent. Some of us occupy cotton fields, some corn. The soil is of the richest alluvial character, susceptible of the highest cultivation; for sugar it can not be surpassed. The whole valley of the Rio Grande, after the settlement of this question, must be rapidly and densely populated. In ten years this wilderness will "smile and blossom like the rose." How gorgeously rich the plantations will be on its banks! Nearly every thing grows here. In the vicinity of the camp there are the remains of a beautiful garden, and in it you have the orange, lemon, fig, banana, plantain, peach, and coconut. It had evidently at one time been under high cultivation, and ornamented with choice and beautiful flowers. This rich body of land is between thirty-five and forty miles in width, and some two hundred and fifty in length.

April 15th. The whole command at work on the fort. The enemy keep pace with us, and *shovel* sand in a style that can give us no contemptible idea of their proficiency in the use of that instrument. A rumor

reached us that Ampudia has been superseded. Lieutenant Deas, of the Artillery, swam the river last night for the purpose, as he stated, of searching for Colonel Cross. General Taylor has blockaded the mouth of the river; the enemy are, therefore, cut off from receiving their supplies from New Orleans.

April 16th. About 11 o'clock four Mexican officers, in full dress, made their appearance; they were bearers of the reply of General Ampudia to General Taylor's letter concerning Colonel Cross. They have heard nothing of him; report Lieutenant Deas as a prisoner on parole.

April 17th. No change. Great military displays with the enemy, and a proportionate barking of dogs in the city. Lieutenant Dobbins of the 3d Infantry, and Lieutenant Porter of the 4th, each with a command of ten men and one non-commissioned officer, left camp with the avowed intention of catching, if possible, some of the band of the notorious Romano Falcon, hoping to discover some clew to the murder of Colonel Cross.

April 18th. Actually rained out of our camp, and were forced to remove it to the bank of the river. The sergeant of Lieutenant Porter's command came in and reported that the lieutenant had been attacked by some Mexicans and was killed. His story is rather contradictory, and we await with great impatience the arrival of Lieutenant Dobbins, or some of the command, to confirm it.

April 19th. The corporal of Lieutenant Porter's party has returned, and confirms the melancholy report of yesterday. Lieutenant Dobbins separated from Lieutenant Porter, and was to meet him at a certain spot. About 2 P.M. on the 19th, met with a party of armed Mexicans engaged in jerking beef. As they ap-

proached their camp, a Mexican snapped his piece at Lieutenant Porter, who returned it with both barrels of his gun. The enemy immediately fled, and the lieutenant found himself in the possession of ten horses and twenty Mexican blankets. He immediately mounted his men and proceeded to camp. At this time it commenced raining violently. He had gone but a short distance when, near the edge of a dense chaparral, he was attacked by a party of Mexicans concealed therein. He ordered his men to dismount; the enemy kept up a brisk fire; both of the lieutenant's barrels snapped, and nearly all the pieces of his men had been rendered useless by the rain. One man by the name of Flood was shot down. After the lieutenant found his piece would not go off, he called to one of the men to hand him his musket; before he could get it, he was shot in the left thigh, and falling, said, "Never mind the gun! *Fight on, my boys! Take care of yourselves!*" The men being unable to get off their pieces, broke for the chaparral, became separated, and found their way into camp as they best could. The man who came in last says he concealed himself until dark in the edge of the chaparral, and saw the proceedings of the enemy. During the fight they yelled like Indians; as soon as our men broke they rushed upon the lieutenant and Flood: the latter they surrounded and deliberately knifed, and then performed the same inhuman office upon Lieutenant P. Lieutenant Porter was the son of the late commodore, and entered the army in 1838: he was a brave, gallant officer, and much esteemed in his Regiment. His fate is truly deplorable. Two commands were sent out to seek for his body. They were neither able to find it, nor the spot where the fight took place. All parts of the country are so precisely

similar, and destitute of landmarks, that it is almost an impossibility to return to any one spot.

April 20th. Nothing new.

April 21st. A Mexican came into camp and reported he knew where the body of an American officer was lying. A command was immediately dispatched for it; it was recognized as being the remains of the lamented Cross; there can be no doubt of its identity.

April 22d. General Ampudia wrote to General Taylor, "That he understood from undoubted authority the river was blockaded; that two vessels laden with stores for his army had been seized and carried into Brazos Santiago. He thought this blockade, under the present circumstances, was unauthorized by the law of nations, and requested him to raise it, or serious consequences would ensue." This is the amount of the communication. These "*serious consequences*" did not alarm us, for we are getting quite accustomed to their high-flown language. The vessels spoken of were not taken, as represented by General Ampudia, but were warned off by our navy.

April 23d. General Taylor replied to the communication received yesterday. It is a capital paper; truly republican, and American in every respect, and for which he should receive the approbation of the people. He is a man of sound views, and by his *strong common sense* (a pretty scarce article nowadays), is sure to arrive at a correct and just conclusion. We feel that the honor of the country is intrusted in safe hands. In his reply, he reviewed every thing which has occurred since we left Corpus Christi to this date: spoke of the proclamation he had issued prior to his departure, in which he said "he would protect the civil and religious rights of the citizens;" that it was with no hos-

tile intentions he advanced to the Rio Grande; reminded him that a Spanish translation of that proclamation had been sent to Matamoras, and that he *knew* General Mejia had seen it; states that his advance was met twenty miles from the Colorado, and were warned, if they advanced, it would be considered a "declaration of war;" at the Colorado they threatened to fire upon him, and again repeated the "declaration of war;" that at Point Isabel he was met by a deputation from Matamoras, at the head of which was the prefect of the State of Tamaulipas, protesting against his occupying the country: after delivering the protest, they caused some buildings to be set on fire, which General Taylor deemed "an act of war." Opposite Matamoras he was again told that his occupancy of the country was looked upon as a "declaration of war." To all these declarations of hostile intentions no heed had been paid; no change had been made in our treatment of, or behavior toward them; but General Taylor had pursued the even tenor of his way. But when General Ampudia arrived, and gave General Taylor "twenty-four hours to quit," he deemed it time to turn his attention to the repeated threats, and conceives the "blockade of the river the least offensive act of war he could have committed under the circumstances; that the blockade had been reported to his government, and he should *maintain* it until he received their orders. Offers them an armistice until the question of boundary is settled, or war declared; and if that is accepted, will raise the blockade, but on no other terms." Tells them he can not pass over the objectionable style and tone of his (Ampudia's) correspondence; that the epithets of "usurpers," "invaders," &c., will not be permitted, and informs him, in future it must be more respectful,

or it will not be received; and concludes by giving him his choice of action: that he is equally ready and prepared for peace or war. Affairs are approaching a crisis; they can not remain thus long. The enemy are reported short of provisions; they must either fight, treat, or just naturally dissolve themselves before many days.

A board of officers assembled to-day to report upon all the circumstances connected with the death of the lamented Cross. A Mexican reported the colonel was captured by Romano Falcon's band of *authorized murderers*; after taking him prisoner, they stripped him of every thing, and then consulted what should be done with him. The majority were for taking him over the river, when Falcon walked up and decided the matter by striking the colonel on his head with the butt of his pistol, from which blow he immediately died. There is no proof of this tale; but the hole in the skull was evidently made by the butt of a pistol.

April 24th. The remains of the late Colonel Cross were buried at half past 4 P.M. His escort was composed of a squadron of Dragoons and eight companies of Infantry, the whole commanded by Colonel Twiggs. The procession, under the circumstances, was painfully imposing. First came the Infantry, next the Dragoons, next the body, drawn by six horses, on the wheels of a caisson, enveloped in the flag of his country; next a sad mourner, his son; then a horse clad in mourning, led by two Dragoons, followed by all the officers off duty. The march was so conducted that part of the way it could be seen from the city; groups of soldiers and officers were upon the enemy's works, and on the bank of the river. The grave was dug at the foot of the flag-staff; the flag was at half mast. Colonel Childs

read the service for the dead; three volleys were fired, the flag was run up, the escort marched off to a gay and lively tune, and left the dead in silence. Such is a military funeral: we have no time for grief.

April 25th. About 10 A.M. a grand review took place among the enemy; great military rejoicing; Arista arrived. He communicated that fact in a note, couched in courteous and gentlemanly terms, transmitted to the general by one of his staff. In the afternoon reports reached us that the enemy were crossing the river, above and below, in great force. Captain Thornton was sent out in the evening with a squadron of the 2d Dragoons to ascertain the fact of their crossing above. Captain Hardee and Lieutenants Kane and Mason were the officers of the party. Every one was on the "qui vive" to ascertain its truth, as, for several days past, matters were assuming a more hostile appearance.

April 26th. The camp was electrified by the news brought by Chapita, the Mexican guide who accompanied Captain Thornton. He returned, and stated Captain Thornton had an engagement with a large body of Mexicans, and all had been either cut to pieces or taken prisoners. The excitement which prevailed in camp can hardly be imagined: the report was passed from tent to tent, and an immediate engagement was thought not improbable. About 11 o'clock a wounded dragoon was brought in on a cart; he was sent by General Torrejon, the commander of the force engaged with Captain Thornton, with a note to General Taylor, stating "that, on the score of humanity, he claimed the right of sending him two dragoons, wounded in the affair of to-day (26th), as he had no *flying hospital*; that the officers and men would be treated with all the rights of prisoners of war, by order of his chief." The

man who was brought in had a very confused idea of the affair; knew that Captain Hardee was a prisoner, but was uncertain about the rest; reporting Captain Thornton and Lieutenant Kane killed. Increased activity was used in pressing forward the work; the general himself, for hours at a time, superintending it. All idea of there being *no fight* has ceased. *War has commenced*, and we look for a conflict within a few days. The train now at Point Isabel is ordered to remain.

General Taylor dispatched a messenger this evening with a requisition on the governors of Louisiana and Texas for five thousand men; three thousand from the former, two thousand from the latter. There is no doubt the enemy are crossing the river, and that all communication with Point Isabel is extremely hazardous. The troops sent for on General Taylor's requisition are expected to be used "to carry the war into Africa." We expect to *whip the Africans back to their country* before their arrival. In anticipation of an attack, the utmost vigilance is used at "the lines." An intrenchment has been thrown up around the camp, and the troops are lying in it under arms before daylight every morning.

April 27th. The general received Captain Hardee's report of the fight. He states that after the guide refused to go any further, on account of the proximity of the enemy, they advanced about three miles, and came to a large plantation surrounded by a very high chaparral fence; that the whole squadron entered the field through the open bars, and advanced about two hundred yards to a house. While there the alarm was given of the enemy. "Our gallant commander ordered a charge, and led it in person; they dashed toward the bars again, but found them occupied by a large

body of Infantry. They dashed to the right, under a galling fire, to endeavor to find a passage." Captain Thornton here fell; and Captain Hardee, taking command, called on his men to follow, and dashed toward the river, intending to swim it, but found the banks too boggy. He returned and formed his men out of range of Infantry. Perceiving they were completely hemmed in, he determined, if he could get honorable terms, to surrender; if not, to die fighting. He rode forward; met an officer; his terms were granted, and he surrendered his party, forty-five, prisoners. He states "that Captain Thornton was unhorsed," and, "I hear, died in a personal conflict with Romano Falcon." "Lieutenant Mason was not seen, but died, no doubt, fighting gallantly." "The gallant Sergeant Tredor fell in the first charge, and Sergeant Smith was unhorsed and killed." They were taken to Matamoras. Captain Hardee and Lieutenant Kane live at the hotel of General Ampudia, eat at his table, and are treated with the greatest kindness. General Arista "received them most graciously," put them on half pay, and gave them a ration, or, in lieu thereof, twenty-five cents per day. On Captain Hardee's declining, for himself and Lieutenant Kane, to receive the half pay, and requesting permission to send for some money, he refused, stating he would take the best of care of them. He speaks in high terms of their kind treatment. It was certainly unexpected, and is highly creditable to the enemy.

April 28th. This morning a report was received from Captain Thornton: the gallant fellow is safe, and is uninjured, save a slight contusion from the fall of his horse. His horse (the "old roan," who had carried him through the Florida war) was shot, and fell on him. He was discovered by some of the enemy some time

after the battle had ceased, taken prisoner, and carried into Matamoras. Poor Mason, it appears, is the only officer killed. He was the nephew of Colonel Mason of the 1st Dragoons, and graduated from West Point in 1842; was assigned as a brevet to the 1st Dragoons, and promoted to the 2d. He was universally beloved; a high-toned, chivalric, and withal a very modest officer; recollections of his noble traits of character will ever be fresh in our memories. Two sergeants and eight privates were killed. It was a complete ambushade; the nature of the country rendered it impossible for them to have discovered an enemy; in the densely thick chaparral any number of men could have remained concealed.

The force of General Torrejon is estimated at two thousand five hundred. General Canales is reported to be in our vicinity. Captain G. A. McCall, 4th Infantry, with one hundred picked men, was sent out to obtain information of the enemy. Captain Walker has authority from General Taylor to raise a company of volunteers. Those he has already enlisted have been stationed midway between this and the Point. Captain Walker has been for some time identified with the border struggles of Texas, and was one of the unfortunate Mier prisoners. Early this morning his camp was attacked by the enemy. He had left fifteen of his men, and gone on a scout with the remainder. Five of his men were killed and four are missing. One of the men was evidently *lariated*, and was probably choked to death before he was pulled off his horse. Generals Canales and Torrejon are supposed to have been in command of the attacking force, and Colonel Quintaro is reported to have his arm broken.

April 29th. It is reported that the Mexicans had at-

tacked Point Isabel, and were signally defeated by Major Munroe, with his two companies of Artillery. The report was too good to be believed; but when Captain McCall returned in the evening, and reported he had heard the discharge of artillery in the direction of the Point, it became generally credited. Every preparation is being made to march to the Point. Subsistence and other stores removed into the fort, wood cut and hauled, &c.

April 30th. The 7th Regiment of Infantry, under the command of Major Brown, have been designated by the general to remain at the fort; Bragg's battery, and Captain Loud, with his company, in charge of the eighteen-pound battery, constitute the remainder of the garrison. The report of the attack upon Point Isabel was erroneous; the impression gains ground that we will be attacked on our march.

May 1st. The general decided we should march at 4 P.M. Every preparation had been made to meet the enemy, and we marched at the appointed hour in capital spirits. We passed through the chaparral without meeting any of the enemy. The march was continued until 12 o'clock at night, and one of the most fatiguing I have ever endured. We slept under arms in the broad prairie, without any fires to take off the chill of the night air. The march was resumed on the 2d, and we reached the Point at 12 o'clock, having suffered much from the intense heat and want of water.

Point Isabel.

L. C. A. J. M. V. U. S. A.
[To face p. 86.]

