

ral, the Regiments became mixed, but fought not the less severely. The enemy clung to their batteries with the greatest pertinacity. Ridgely's Artillery thundered in reply. This gallant officer, in one of his daring advances, had only one piece unlimbered, when he was charged by a body of lancers, who came dashing down upon him like thunder, when Sergeant Kearnes put a load of cannister on the top of a shell and fired it; this scattered them all but *four*, who still dashed along. Lieutenant Ridgely charged them in person, and drove them off.

Captain May rode back to the general, and asked if he should charge the battery on the opposite side of the ravine. "*Charge, captain, nolens volens!*" was the reply; and away dashed the gallant fellow. As he passed Ridgely's battery, Ridgely exclaimed, "*Hold on, Charley, till I draw their fire!*" and it is well for May that he partially succeeded. Away dashed this gallant squadron down the ravine; Lieutenant Inge fell, and many of their saddles were vacated. On went the rest; crossed the ravine, and captured the battery. Captain Graham's company was associated with May's in this memorable charge. General La Vega, standing at his battery to the last, was taken prisoner by May, and passed to the rear.

On the right of the road, where the 3d deployed, no enemy was met; but the Regiment so far outflanked them as to be in danger of fires from our own batteries. The density of the chaparral was such that they could not make their way through, but were forced to return, in order to get into the action. They reached the ravine just after the desperate charge of the Infantry (in which the 8th was so conspicuous) had completely routed the enemy. Immediately after their batteries were

captured, Duncan came up with his battery and took the advance. The Dragoons, 3d Infantry, and Captain Smith's command were ordered to support the Artillery. The enemy were in full retreat. On we all pushed, hemmed in a narrow road by a dense chaparral on each side, the Artillery advancing and pouring in its bloody fire, and clearing the road. About two hundred yards from the ravine we came upon the camp of the enemy. It was already captured and deserted. To this point the gallant Barbour had fearlessly advanced with his company of the 3d Infantry, and, unaided, successfully resisted a desperate charge of cavalry: the empty saddles, and horses writhing in the agony of death, marked the spot where the struggle occurred.

The huge packs of the enemy were arranged with great regularity upon the ground; mules, some with packs, were scattered about; beeves were killed, their camp-fires lighted, and their meals cooking. They evidently expected to have been undisturbed that night. On, on we went, keeping up a run, and yelling like mad! The enemy now and then gave symptoms of a stand, but were driven on, scattering themselves in the chaparral, and availing themselves of every trail that led to the river. We neared the lines of our old camp; our cheers reached high heaven, when they were suddenly silenced by three shots from an eighteen-pounder which came very near killing some of our men. The first impression was that our friends had mistaken us for the enemy, and were firing at us from the fort; but we soon ascertained the shots came from the city.* The enemy fled in every direction, and many were

* The Artillery Battalion, under Colonel Childs, remained in rear to guard the train, and thus reduced our fighting force to one thousand seven hundred.

drowned in their attempts to swim the river. It was a perfect route, "horse, foot, and dragoons."

Our brave general had gained a glorious victory over the best-appointed army Mexico ever sent into the field; confident of success, in an almost impregnable position, and with an overwhelming force, at least three to one. There were two thousand troops not in the battle of the 8th, who crossed the river the evening of that day, expressly to join in the battle of the 9th. They were veterans of *twenty* successful battles, and in their own country, upon whichever side they fought, victory perched. Every thing was in their favor; position, numbers, confidence; and, yet, with all these, they failed. History does not furnish a more striking battle than "Resaca de la Palma," the battle of the 9th of May. So confident were they of victory, that Ampudia, speaking to Captain Thornton, who was then their prisoner, said "it was utterly impossible that it could be otherwise; that their numbers alone were sufficient, independent of those *veteran* regiments." General La Vega said that "if he had any sum of money in camp, he should have considered it as safe as if at the city of Mexico; and he would *have bet any amount that no ten thousand men could have driven them.*" The dead, dying, and wounded were strewn in every direction. Our brilliant victory was purchased with the blood of some gallant souls.

Our loss in this action was three officers and thirty-six men killed, twelve officers and fifty-nine men wounded. The names of the officers killed are, Lieutenant Z. Inge, 2d Dragoons; Lieutenant R. E. Cochran, 4th Infantry; and Lieutenant T. L. Chadbourne, 8th Infantry. The wounded officers are, Colonel M. M. Payne, 4th Artillery, acting inspector-general;

Colonel J. S. McIntosh, 5th Infantry ; Captain A. Hooe, 5th Infantry ; Lieutenant S. H. Fowler, 5th Infantry ; Captain W. R. Montgomery, Lieutenants J. Selden, R. P. Maclay, C. F. Morris, C. R. Gates, J. G. Burbank, and C. D. Jordan, 8th Infantry ; and Lieutenant S. D. Dobbins, 3d Infantry. We captured from the enemy, eight pieces of artillery, two thousand stand of arms, two hundred mules, a great number of packs and the necessary appurtenances, all the baggage and camp equipage of the army, and one hundred and fifty thousand rounds of musket cartridges. All General Arista's private baggage and papers fell into our hands, from which much important information was obtained. One general, one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, four captains, and five lieutenants were taken prisoners. Three captains and four lieutenants were buried on the field ; and they acknowledge that forty-eight officers, besides these, are missing. The loss of the enemy in killed, wounded, and missing can not be less than two thousand. It was a victory achieved by the *army proper*, and, as such, doubly dear to us.

Many acts of individual daring are recorded. General Taylor was sitting on his horse in the thickest of the fight, with his sword drawn, while the balls were rattling around him. Colonel C., the amiable sutler of the 4th Infantry, formerly mayor of Augusta, Ga., and well known for his courage and kindness of disposition, remarked to him that he was exposing his person very much, and proposed to him to retire a short distance : "*Let us ride a little nearer, the balls will fall behind us,*" was the general's reply. Lieutenant Lincoln, of the 8th, killed two Mexicans with his saber.

It is a great pity we were unable to follow up our success. Had we crossed the river the night of the

all the camp women were left at Fort Brown; and they, poor creatures, underwent the horrors of the siege. I would have rather fought twenty battles than have passed through the bombardment of Fort Brown.

On the 10th we were actively employed burying the dead. Lieutenants Inge, Chadbourne, and Cochrane were buried with funeral honors; the unsodded grave by the road side, with its rude paling, marks the spot where sleep those who died gallantly in battle. The Mexican prisoners were employed burying their dead.

On the 11th Captain Thornton and his party were exchanged, and, to the great joy of their friends, they arrived in the afternoon. Lieutenant Deas was also returned. General La Vega, with other prisoners, were sent to Point Isabel. The former declines his parole, and goes to New Orleans. General Taylor and staff left for Point Isabel, and the army marched and occupied their old camp.

Headquarters, Army of Occupation, }
Resaca de la Palma, May 11, 1846. }

Order No. 59.

The commanding general congratulates the army under his command upon the signal success which has crowned its recent operations against the enemy. The coolness and readiness of the troops during the action of the 8th, and the brilliant impetuosity with which the enemy's position and artillery were carried on the 9th, have displayed the best qualities of the American soldier. To every officer and soldier of his command, the general publicly returns his thanks for the noble manner in which they have sustained the honor of the service and of the country.

While the main body of the army has been thus actively employed, the garrison left opposite Matamoras

has rendered no less distinguished service by sustaining a severe cannonade and bombardment for many successive days.

The army and country, while justly rejoicing in this triumph of our arms, will deplore the loss of many brave officers and men, who fell gallantly in the hour of combat.

It being necessary for the commanding general to visit Point Isabel on public business, Colonel Twiggs will assume command of the corps of the army near Matamoras, including the garrison of the field-work. He will occupy the former lines of the army, making such disposition for defense, and for the comfort of his command, as he may deem advisable. He will hold himself strictly on the defensive until the return of the commanding general.

By order of Brigadier-general TAYLOR:

W. W. S. BLISS, Assistant Adjutant-general.

On the 12th we received the melancholy intelligence of the death of Major Ringgold. He died at Point Isabel on the 11th of May, and was buried with funeral honors on the 12th. He was a graduate of West Point, and esteemed one of the best Artillery officers in the service. For some time he commanded a battery of Light Artillery, and brought that arm of the service to great perfection, and lived to see its efficiency exemplified upon the field of battle. He was a high-toned, chivalric soldier, and his death is universally regretted. The wounded of the enemy were sent over to Matamoras to be attended to by their own surgeons. Colonel Twiggs took receipts for those turned over other than exchanged.

A solemn silence hangs round the city; we see no

military displays, no music—even the dogs have ceased barking. We heard to-day of some horrible murders committed on the 1st of May by a party of rancheros. A party of sixteen citizens were crossing the country from Corpus Christi. Two of the party were women. They were surprised, and captured near the Colorado. They were stripped, tied together by two's, taken across the river, had their throats cut with a large knife, and were then thrown into the stream. Two of them escaped by swimming; one of them, William Rogers, wandered for five days, without any thing to eat, in the chaparral, and was finally captured and taken to Matamoras. He was sent over by General Arista, and is now under the treatment of our medical officers. Was ever any thing more barbarous, more perfectly shocking?

Nothing of any interest occurred on the 13th. Reports were received that many of the enemy were deserting, and that the "morale" of the army was destroyed. General Taylor returned on the 14th. Four companies of the 1st Infantry, under Lieutenant-colonel Wilson, have arrived at the Brasos, and five companies of the Volunteers. An expedition, under the command of Colonel Wilson, has been organized to march upon Burita.

On the 15th and 16th the river was examined with the view of selecting a point to cross. On the 17th the general decided we should move to the point selected, and commence operations against the city. We struck our tents early in the morning. Our unusual stir and activity was seen by the enemy, and no doubt attributed to the proper cause. We were all anxiously awaiting the order to move, when we were informed a parley had been sounded by the enemy, and that a

deputation from General Arista had crossed to see General Taylor. General Ricardo was at the head of it; Arista proposed to enter into an armistice until they could hear from Mexico, not doubting the boundary would *now* be settled. General Taylor said, "No, that he had offered them one some time since; had evinced the most friendly disposition; that they would not agree to it when his army was weak, and now, that re-enforcements had arrived, he should dictate his own terms." Ricardo wished to know if the general intended taking Matamoras. He said, "Yes." General Ricardo offered to surrender all the public property, ammunition, &c., if he would not cross. The general said, "No, he must have Matamoras, if he had to batter it down, and that now he was prepared to do it." By the train we had received some additional supplies of ordnance and ammunition. He told him to tell General Arista that these, and these only, were his terms. That the city must capitulate, all public property, ammunition, provisions, &c., must be given up, and then the army might march out and retire." The deputation then returned to obtain General Arista's answer, which was to be communicated at 3 P.M. In the mean time the army marched, and encamped three miles up the river. General Taylor told General Ricardo that Ampudia had written him the war should be conducted agreeably to the usage of civilized nations; that in the last battle the enemy had stripped our dead, and mutilated their bodies. General Ricardo replied, "that the women who followed the army, and rancheros, did it; that they could not control them." Our brave old general replied, "*I am coming over, and I'll control them for you.*"

During the evening active preparations were made

to cross the troops. No reply was given to the general's proposition. The country people commenced crossing to us, and reported the army had deserted the city, and retired.

On the morning of the 18th confirmation was received of the reported flight of Arista and his army. The scare was still working. Early in the morning, the Dragoons, Captain Walker's company of Rangers, the light companies of the different battalions, Ridgely's battery, and the 5th Infantry were crossed, and took up a favorable position to cover the passage. I regret to record that, in crossing, Lieutenant Stevens, of the 2d Dragoons, was drowned. He was a fine young officer, much beloved by his regiment; his death threw a gloom over the camp. For what singular destinies are we reserved, and how certainly and irresistibly one has to advance and fulfill his *fate*! He was among those gallant fellows who stared death in the face in the late brilliant charge of Captain May; with balls scattering around him in every direction, his life was spared, only to be resigned in a few days in the waters of the Bravo.

The flight of the enemy having been undoubtedly ascertained, and the civil authorities of the city having invited General Taylor to take possession of it, the crossing of the remainder of the army was effected at the upper ferry of the city. Upon our approach to the ferry we saw our troops were in possession of Fort Paredes, and busily engaged in preparing to run up our flag. Just as we reached the bank, Captain Ker, of the 2d Dragoons, ran it up; it floated gracefully in the breeze, and proudly waved over Mexico. The men of the advance sent up three hearty cheers to welcome the flag of their country. There was a rope stretched

across the river, and three boats manned by Mexicans ready to transport us. We had the felicity of being *ferried across by the enemy*. As they landed, each company was formed and awaited the arrival of the others. When the whole of the 3d was formed, it moved off to the right, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Did you ever hear it, dear reader? I reckon you never did, in a foreign land, just conquered by good, honest hard blows! If you have, you never heard such an honest cheer as arose from the gallant fellows on the opposite bank when the drum and fife gave us that air, which fills at all times an American's breast with the purest patriotism. All was excitement, and every one boiling over with "*amor patriæ*." It was a proud day for the American army. Citizens in crowds came down to see us; many of them, who ten days ago would have cut our throats, were now apparently our warmest friends, shook our hands heartily, and cried lustily "*amigo*."

We here saw *some signs* of the hurry in which Arista had left. As we landed near the fort, boxes of destroyed ammunition were visible, and it was rumored that two pieces of artillery were thrown into the river. The army left most precipitately, during the day and night of the 17th of May, taking with them, as it appears, eleven pieces of artillery, and *any thing but* a large supply of ammunition. Our victory is more complete than we have claimed. The citizens say that Arista had not over three thousand men with him. What has become of the remainder of the seven thousand? Many, no doubt, deserted, but the bloody battles of the 8th and 9th of May, and the "whirlpools of the Bravo," can tell the tale.

The troops were encamped above and below the
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city. We had indulged the hope of being quartered in it; but our worthy general saw fit to direct otherwise. Women, they say, are full of curiosity; but if they ever felt more than we did to see that city, I say God help them. We had encamped but a short time before a party of us rode to the city to gratify that consuming passion. Never have I been more disappointed; never did distance more thoroughly lend "enchantment to the view." I first rode up to the Plaza, which is quite a large square, surrounded by china trees. The houses facing the square are built of brick or stone; the lower part used as stores or offices, and the second story as dwellings. The walls are very massive, and their windows barred, so that one thinks they were built for defense. Streets diverge from the Plaza, and are crossed by others. The Cathedral occupies a large space on one side of the square, and is an unfinished mass of masonry. Directly opposite to the Cathedral is the prison—properly situated, the poison and the antidote. There are a great many stores, and a market-house which is well supplied. I visited the different hospitals; they are filled with the wounded and dying. The stench that arose from them, for the want of police, was disgusting. You could tell at a glance the wounded of Palo Alto or Resaca de la Palma. The latter were mostly bullet wounds; the amputated limbs told of the cannon's fearful execution in the former. Beside one poor fellow a beautiful girl of seventeen was seated, keeping off the flies. She was his wife. In another corner a family group, the mother and her children, were seated by the wounded father. One bright-eyed little girl quite took my fancy, and my heart bled to think that thus early she should be introduced to so much wretchedness. On one bed was a corpse; on

another, one was dying, holding in his hand the grape-shot that had passed through his breast. He showed it to us with a sad countenance. I left the hospital shocked with the horrors of war. The enemy left their wounded comrades, with very little attention to their wants.

I next rode round the city: some distance from the Plaza the houses became more detached, surrounded by yards containing various tropical trees and flowers; many of the roofs are thatched, and in the outskirts of the city the common "jacal" prevails. On the whole, it is one of the most indifferent and filthy cities I have ever seen. The greater part of the genteel population have left; in about one house in three of the more humble cast, one of the family was diligently *searching the heads* of the others. It is said they are *some for lice*, and that disagreeable reflection made me think it was time to depart for camp.

Colonel Twiggs has had the especial charge of the city, as far as the discovery and collection of the public property was concerned. The general declined interfering with the municipal authorities. He is a law-abiding man, and prefers that it should take its course, unless interference is positively necessary. The worthy colonel has a way of his own in throwing his mantle of protection and *find-out-a-tiveness* over all, and the alcalde has often felt the effect of it. He has carried on his examination with the greatest energy and success; discovering several pieces of small ordnance, all kinds of munitions of war, a large number of muskets, corn, lumber, tobacco, and cigars: a great deal of powder and fixed ammunition had been thrown into the wells. The alcalde manifested no great willingness to make discoveries, but the colonel was too much for

him. The government enjoys the monopoly of the sale of tobacco, deriving an immense revenue from it. They sell the plain leaf at *six cents per ounce*. These munitions of war have been collecting since Santa Anna's invasion of Texas in 1836. Large quantities of anchors were discovered, intended to be used in anchoring boats and bridges upon which to cross their armies during their march into Texas.

I can not but repeat, that we all feel proud that these conquests have been effected by the *army proper*. We were all aware of the undeserved remarks that had been made in reference to us by some portions of the press, and representatives in Congress, and we only asked for an *opportunity*, few as we were, to *prove* to our country she had a safe anchor in our *small* but gallant force. By far the great majority of the officers were graduates of the Military Academy; all did their duty, and many distinguished themselves by their skill and thorough knowledge of their profession. All arises from their instruction received at that best of institutions, the West Point Military Academy. In the hour of our country's danger she will always prove her usefulness, and her graduates will show to their country and the world that the money expended in the education of so talented a corps of officers has not been thrown away; richly will she be repaid for every cent expended. Our Alma Mater may be proud of her sons; conspicuously have they shown themselves soldiers upon the *field of battle*. Away, hereafter, with opposition to an institution which sends forth, for the country's service, yearly, a class of young gentlemen fitted for any walk in life.

CHAPTER XI.

ON the 19th of May Colonel Garland was sent out with two companies of Rangers and the Dragoons, to follow up and observe the course of the retreating army. He returned on the 22d, having advanced sixty miles; about twenty-seven miles hence he fell in with the rear-guard of the army, and attacked them at 10 P.M. Two of his men (Rangers) were wounded; killed two, and wounded two of the enemy, and captured twenty men with their baggage. His command, being quite small, was not intended for hostile operations, but merely a corps of observation. The march of the enemy for the first day was attended with great confusion; but subsequently they organized and retreated in good order. How much it is to be regretted we were not strong enough to give immediate pursuit; a thousand Cavalry would have been valuable beyond price. I paid another visit of *curiosity* to the city. Mr. B., an American merchant, was kind enough to take me round. We first visited the city prison; it is a building of very thick walls, with a large interior area, along which the prison-rooms were ranged; the filth about it was disgusting. In the second story of one of the magazines is the Hall of Justice; it occupies the whole depth of the building. At the lower end is a railing inclosing the seats for the judges and jury; in the center was a large table, covered with red cloth, with three arm-chairs for the judges, and one opposite for the clerk; directly opposite the judge's seat was suspended, in a frame, the arms of Mexico; on each side, along the