

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



walls, were six seats, covered with crimson velvet, for the jury. We were told we were in the "Holy of Holies," and, if we had entered it in this uncereemonious manner two weeks since, imprisonment would have been our least punishment.

We visited a gentleman who showed us a magnificent Spanish saddle, valued at \$400. The pommel and cantel were of solid silver, the covering and every thing attached to it being worked with silver thread. The gentleman had a very comfortable house; three large rooms opened one into the other; paintings and a piano gave evidence of taste and refinement. Their areas and thick walls attract the eye of the visitor; they must make the dwelling deliciously cool. Visited the unfinished Cathedral, one room of which has been rudely fitted up for the service of the Church. The furniture around the altar was very neat, but not as costly as I had been led to suppose; no diamond and pearl petticoats of "our Lady of Guadalupe."

General Taylor very properly divided the captured cigars among the command; such a happy set of smoking dogs never were seen, and all at the expense of the enemy. There was something consoling in the thought; no men have better earned a *smoking* indulgence by *smoking* work.

None of the volunteers, up to the 22d of May, had joined the main army. The state authorities of Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas promptly met the call for troops, and hastened larger re-enforcements than called for to the seat of war. We daily hear of their arrival at the Brasos. General P. F. Smith has arrived, in command of the troops from Louisiana, and is daily expected from Barita, of which place undisputed possession was taken by the command under Colonel Wil-

son on the 17th of May. A great disproportion exists between the arrival of troops and means of transportation; so much so, that the general feels himself annoyed and crippled, and will be forced to keep the greater part of the Volunteers encamped near the mouth of the river. General Smith, with his command, and Colonel Wilson, with four companies of the 1st Artillery, arrived on the 24th of May, and encamped opposite Matamoras. The steam-boat Neva arrived the same day, transporting the baggage of the command. The arrival of the steam-boat was hailed with three hearty cheers; it looked quite like *civilization*, and as if our friends were following us up.

General Worth returned on the 25th, having withdrawn his resignation. The citizens of New Orleans, ever just in patriotic impulses, shipped in the steamer Alabama a magnificent horse, which they presented to Captain Walker for his courage and perseverance in effecting a communication with Fort Brown during its bombardment, and while it was surrounded by the enemy.

Upon the reception of the intelligence of the capture of Captain Thornton and his command, the President of the United States addressed a message to Congress (on the 12th of May), recommending a declaration of war, and calling for men and money to prosecute it with vigor. On the 13th of May Congress sustained the recommendation, passed a law authorizing the raising of fifty thousand Volunteers, and appropriated ten millions of dollars for the expenses of the war. The Secretary of War promptly called upon the governors of the different states for their quotas, and officers were immediately sent to different points to muster into service the organized regiments. These regiments were



enlisted for twelve months. Instructions were sent to General Taylor to muster out of service all the volunteers who would not enlist for twelve months. They were originally enlisted for six months. Those discharged consisted of the Louisiana Volunteers, comprising General Smith's brigade, the regiments commanded by Colonels Reyton and Featherston; the St. Louis Legion, three companies of Alabama Volunteers under Captains Desha, Plate, and Elmore, and the battalion, from the same state, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Raiford. The prompt action of Congress gives proof to the world that a Republic, naturally averse to war, and anxious to cultivate peace, is at all times ready and willing to vindicate its rights and confront its invaders. How promptly the good citizens have responded to the call of the executive! How unanimous has been the action of the whole country! What an irresistible influence our action must carry with it across the "big water." Woe to the crowned head that interferes with rising, onward, onward America! On questions affecting our national honor, we are one! No matter what our internal dissensions, when the foe appears, *united* we meet him. This war, decidedly *not* a popular one, tests the strength of our institutions. Talk of the instability of this government! A division of this Union will never take place.

On the 23d of April war was declared by a manifesto issued at the city of Mexico by President Paredes, and transmitted to his generals commanding on the frontier. In opposition to the strenuous exertions of our government to effect an amicable compromise of our difficulties, it seems it was the determination of their government to commence hostilities, and make a futile attempt to reconquer Texas. No doubt our di-

minutive force urged them on, with the belief an easy victory was at hand. A more respectable force might have prevented the war. Under all circumstances, it must be borne in mind that Mexico *commenced hostilities*—that *she fired the first gun*.

To render the regiments more efficient, about the latter part of May four companies from each were ordered to be broken up, the men to be distributed among the remaining five, and the officers of those broken up to be sent on the recruiting service.

On the 1st of June, Hugh M'Leod, Esq., issued the first American paper west of the Rio Grande; it was called the "Republic of the Rio Grande, and the People's Friend." On the 6th of June, Lieutenant-colonel Wilson, with four companies of the 1st Infantry, Price's company of Rangers, and a section of Bragg's battery, under Lieutenant Thomas, left for Reynosa. The authorities of the town, soon after the fall of Matamoras, signified, through a delegation to General Taylor, their willingness to give it up. It is situated on the river, sixty miles above Matamoras.

General Taylor turned all his energies toward effecting a speedy advance; but the deficiency of transportation was again a stumbling-block. It was necessary that all the towns and prominent points on the river should be occupied, between Matamoras and Camargo, as the latter is destined to be our base of operations on Monterey, and all our provisions and stores will be transported there by steam.

On the 9th of June the committee from the Legislature of Louisiana presented to General Taylor the resolutions of that body upon the occasions of the late victories. They voted him a sword. The ceremony was performed in front of his tent, nearly all the officers of



the army being present. Mr. Cole, on the part of the committee, made the general a very happy speech, to which he briefly, but feelingly replied. It was an interesting ceremony, and one of which our noble general felt justly proud. Immediately afterward a splendid collation made us all quite happy.

On the 10th of June Governor Henderson arrived from Texas, with a large command of volunteers. He marched across the country. The volunteers are arriving in great numbers by every transport from the States. Mr. Shatsel, our consul at Matamoras, arrived from Tampico on the 11th of June. He was ordered away from Matamoras, at a moment's warning, by General Ampudia, and, of course, was exposed to all the suffering incident to traveling over a wilderness country, without any conveniences. The good citizens are becoming more at home with us; many of the genteel classes are showing themselves. There is a great deal of beauty among them—some most strikingly beautiful faces. They lead a luxurious life, at least I call it so; and if any of my readers have inhabited a southern clime, and felt the enervating effects of the climate, they will agree with me. They sit all day long in buildings with thick walls and brick floors, with their beautiful suits of hair nicely braided and tied up, having the least quantity of dress you can *possibly* fancy; and in the evening they emerge like bees from their hives, take possession of their balconies, and enjoy one of the most delicious evening climates that God has ever granted to poor mortals. I apply this, of course, to the better class, for the filth of the other is not endurable. They are very sociable, and will permit you to stop at their lattice windows and gaze on their beautiful faces, whether from sheer laziness, or love of admiration, I will not pretend to decide.

If you are a lover of nature—*unadorned*—you can gratify your taste by walking up to Fort Paredes any pleasant evening, and witness the fair ones bathing in the Rio Grande; no offense is taken by looking at them enjoying their aquatic amusements.

In the charge led by the gallant May were poor Inge and Lieutenant Sackett; when May gave the word "Charge!" Sackett's horse, being a little the quickest, got the start. In the midst of the enemy's fire May said to Sackett, "Sackett, that's not fair; you took the jump on me." Lieutenant Sackett's horse was almost at that moment shot, and fell with him into a water-hole; he fell upon Sackett, who with great difficulty disengaged himself, with the loss of his sword; gaining the bank, he seized a horse from a Mexican dragoon, took a sword from a Mexican officer, mounted his charger, and joined in the "mélée." When the battle was over he returned the sword to the officer. Corporal Farrel, of the 4th Infantry, with ten men, came up to Lieutenant Hays, of the 4th, and exclaimed, "Lieutenant, if we had an officer to lead us, we could take that piece," referring to one that was pouring the "leaden messengers of death" into our poor fellows. "You shall not say you had no officer to lead you, corporal: *follow me!*" was the reply of the fearless Hays; and away they dashed, stormed the battery, and *took it!* Such, such is the character of the American officer and soldier. It must not be thought the enemy did not fight. *They fought, at first, like devils!* The piles of wounded along their lines tell how they stood up to it. The Tampico Regiment, the 6th and 10th Infantry, suffered the most. It is said a battalion of the "Garda Costa's" of Tampico, numbering two hundred



and fifty, left two hundred dead and wounded upon the field.

The river has risen to an immense height, and in many places overflowed its banks. It will be quite favorable to our operations, provided the rise does not subside before our boats arrive. Lieutenant-colonel Payne is ordered to Washington, to convey the standards and other trophies taken from the enemy. Our wounded are generally doing very well, except Captain Page, who, it is thought, can not recover.

Early in July our steam-boats commenced arriving. The 7th Infantry, under the command of Captain Miles, left for Reynosa, on their way to Camargo, on the 6th and 7th of July. These companies took water transportation, and the remainder started to march. They were compelled to relinquish the prosecution of it by the back-water from the river, and were forced at last to take water transportation. For many years such a freshet has not been known. It is a mighty current. The Mexicans say there has been a special interposition of Divine Providence in our favor, causing the river to rise so that we can transport our troops and supplies to Camargo without any trouble. If they really think so, the omen must be any thing but favorable to their cause. It certainly never was intended this lovely land, rich in every production, with a climate that exceeds any thing the imagination can conceive of, should remain in the hands of an ignorant and degenerate race. The finger of Fate points, if not to their eventual extinction, to the time when they will cease to be owners, and when the Anglo-American race will rule with republican simplicity and justice, a land literally "flowing with milk and honey;" who will, by their superior mental, if not physical abilities—by their energy and

*go-a-head-a-tiveness*, which no sufferings or privations can retard, which shines alike in the frozen regions of the North and under the burning sun of the South, render available the surprising fertility of the soil, its immense mineral wealth, and populate the country with a race of men who will prove the infinite goodness of our Maker in creating nothing but what is for use and some good purpose.

No part of Texas surpasses in fertility, or equals in salubrity, the Valley of the Rio Grande. The river courses its way from the mountains through a varied climate, which will produce any thing, from wheat to sugar and cotton. Nothing can exceed the rich growth of vines. The melon flourishes, and our camp is daily supplied with fine water-melons. This region of country is bound to be settled very rapidly; if nothing else points it out as a desirable location, the fact of the Rio Grande being *really a navigable stream* is sufficient. In point of health, few regions can surpass it. There are no causes for disease; there are no swamps, which, in the heat of summer, throw out their poisonous miasma; the banks are high, and the country preserves that character to the Colorado. Let this boundary be settled, and there will be a tide of emigration to this favored region rarely equaled. If some of our northern farmers would settle here, they could make one flower-garden of the river banks, from its source to its mouth. Cultivation can be carried on by white labor, I think, beyond a doubt. No summer climate can exceed it in loveliness; the everlasting breeze deprives the sun of much of its heat. Such evenings! Such a morn! Young people should come here to make love; the old should emigrate and rejuvenate themselves. To the former I say, the moon shines with such bewitching



sweetness, no matter how determined they may be to live and die maids, they will find it impossible to resist "the little god:" to the latter, some of the romance of their early days will be renewed, and their frames invigorated by the ocean breeze, which comes every evening laden with coolness and health.

As the transportation arrives, the general will push forward his forces. The court for the trial of Captain Thornton met on the 10th. Two of the Catholic clergymen, appointed chaplains to the army, have arrived. These appointments will be productive of much good. The Mexicans have been told they would be persecuted "for conscience' sake;" that we would tolerate no religion but the Protestant; and their priests have added all the fuel to the flame they could, to produce the impression among these poor, ignorant creatures that we are a set of savage barbarians. Our acts, both civil and military, and now religious, will prove the contrary, and will open their eyes to the magnitude of the attempted deception.

The behavior of our army after victory is as highly honorable as the victories themselves. In taking possession of Matamoras we have not interfered with either the civil or religious rights of the inhabitants. Their courts of justice are still held, the most perfect respect is paid to law and order, and every infraction of either is severely punished. The army, instead of entering the city as conquerors, encamp quietly in the suburbs. Instead of taking possession of their houses for our men, we remain under *miserable* canvas, which affords no protection from the storm, and scarcely shade to protect the soldier from the noonday sun. Many have *no tents*, and yet, under these circumstances, no building is occupied: those taken for store-houses

and public offices are regularly rented. By such conduct we have restored confidence to the people; the citizens mingle freely among us, walk through our camp, and feel sure of protection. Such conduct should make our countrymen proud of their army.

On the 13th the 5th Infantry commenced their movement for Camargo, of which undisputed possession was taken by Captain Miles. Immediately on the receipt of the news of the victories of the 8th and 9th of May, the president conferred upon General Taylor a brevet major-generalcy, and Congress passed a vote of thanks to himself and army. On the 15th of July we received the joyful news that he had been promoted a major-general in the army, and that Colonels Twiggs and Kearney were appointed brigadier-generals. Some time in May General Scott was informed that he would be sent to take command of the army in the field, but, from a misunderstanding between himself and the executive, the authority was withdrawn, and he was ordered to remain at Washington. This insured the command of the army, for the approaching campaign, to the hero of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

Captain Thornton delivered his defense on the 15th; and, although the sentence of the court can not be known, yet we feel he is honorably acquitted. By the papers received to-day (15th July), we see some surprise expressed at the tardiness of our movements. The grumblers had better hold their peace, and first inquire if their fault-finding is just. One unacquainted with military details can hardly imagine the number of obstacles (which can not be anticipated) which arise to prevent our rapid progress. The government has poured in a very large force, without, at the same time, sending the necessary transportation. I may have re-



peated this very often, but I can not help it, for it is our daily complaint. Transportation does not grow in this country. When any anxiety is expressed, let all reflect that the honor of the country is intrusted to a brave and persevering general, who has every inducement to push forward and win fresh laurels. Every exertion is made at Camargo to hire mules; and it is hoped, by the time the army is concentrated at that point, all will be ready for a forward movement. The people may rest assured they will have a good account of us; and, if means do not fail us, the war will be pushed on with energy and perseverance. The scabbard must now be flung away, and the war prosecuted with such determined energy as to bring the Mexican nation to their senses, and teach them there is a point "beyond which endurance ceases to be a virtue."

Our reports of the movements of the enemy are of the most contradictory nature. Some say they are making every preparation to meet us at Monterey; and others, that there is but a handful of disaffected soldiers to resist our approach. In this country of magnificent distances, where our operations must necessarily be so far from our base, and from which nearly all our subsistence must be drawn, if the people are united against us, and will make this a patriotic struggle, we may find no little difficulty in conquering a peace. We have received news of the new appointments of two major-generals and six brigadiers for the war. General Hamer has arrived.

Of late there have been several disgraceful riots in the city, in which some of the volunteers were conspicuous, arising from the lax state of discipline in some of the regiments. The 1st Brigade commenced its movement on the 19th. It is commanded by General

Worth. Every steam-boat goes up filled with troops, and, returning, transports to the mouth the Louisiana Volunteers from the camp. General Smith is encamped about sixteen miles above this place. They are all disgusted—have undergone all the hardships of a summer's encampment in this climate, and return "without the *first red*" of a fight. The army congratulate themselves upon retaining the services of General Smith. This valuable officer will continue throughout the campaign.

Before July 24th Mier was taken, without any resistance. The arrival of our troops at Camargo was hailed with great joy by the people. General Canales, after inflicting numerous pains and penalties upon the good people, left just before our forces arrived. The citizens felt a security from our presence that their own troops did not impart. They already see we come not to conquer them, nor to interfere in the slightest degree with their comforts; our sole object is to drag that justice from their tyrannical rulers so long denied us.

The 3d Brigade commenced their movement on the 28th. It was decided to take the batteries up by land. Captain Duncan's battery moved first, escorted by a company of the 8th Infantry. On the 4th of August General Taylor and staff left. Colonel Garland, with two companies of Infantry, and Bragg's battery, leave on the 6th; and General Twiggs, with the Dragoons and Ridgely's battery, remain until all have left. Matamoras is left in command of Lieutenant-colonel Clark, with two companies of Artillery and a regiment of Ohio Volunteers, under command of Colonel Curtis. The volunteers designated for Camargo will be pushed forward with rapidity. Colonel Hays, with his regi-