

whole squadron for the Brasos, to offer all the assistance in his power to General Taylor. A command of five hundred marines and sailors were landed on the 8th, under the command of Captain Gregory, to assist in the defense of the fort in case of attack. Another command of five hundred marines and sailors, under Captain Aulick, proceeded up the Rio Grande to act in concert with the expedition of Colonel Wilson against Burita. An unsuccessful attack was made upon the small town of Alvarado on the 8th of August. Shots were exchanged, resulting in no injury on either side. To the great astonishment of a majority of officers, the attempt was abandoned; the reason assigned, the difficulty in crossing the bar, and an approaching storm.

CHAPTER XII.

AUGUST 5th. Colonel Garland's command of four companies of Infantry, and Bragg's battery, took up their line of march for Camargo. Nothing could exceed the miserable condition of the roads: the rain of the previous days had made them ankle-deep in mud. The whole population of the district through which we marched turned out to see us; I must confess we presented but a sorry appearance, even if the fife and drum *did* keep up, with a perfect *vim*, the good old tune of "The girl I left behind me." Owing to the flooded condition of the country, we were forced to make a "detour" of some thirty miles; and, instead of taking our proper course, which was nearly west, we started southeast. The flat land upon which Matamoras is situated was completely inundated, making the

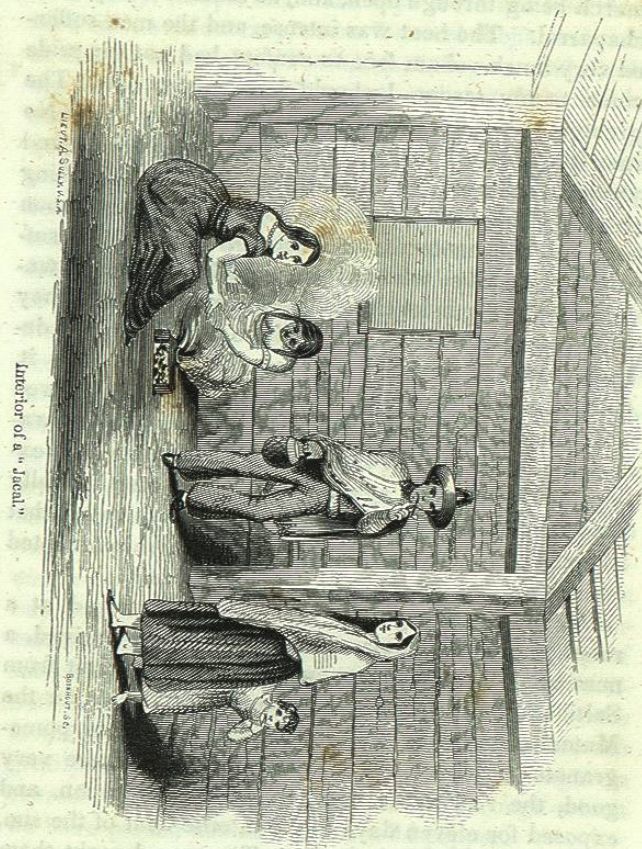
march fatiguing for men and animals. After marching four miles through thick chaparral, we ascended another table or shelf of land which was somewhat less humid. Passed a few indifferently-cultivated ranchos; the soil was very rich, and the growth of mesquite abundant. About seven miles from the city, entered a beautiful oblong prairie; in the center was an extensive slash, filled with every species of plover; a large herd of horses dashing through the water gave animation to the scene. Encamped, after a march of twelve miles, on the borders of a pretty pond; the grazing was capital, and the men refreshed themselves by bathing.

August 6th. Marched at daybreak; the roads, if possible, were heavier than ever, and a drenching shower previous to marching did not improve them. The road for the first six miles continued through a thick growth of mesquite. Some Mexicans we opportunely met informed us that our guide, instead of turning off at the proper road, was taking us toward Linares, the headquarters of the Mexican army. Our small force would have cut a figure at such an introduction! Whether the rascal did it intentionally, I could not understand; but if his face was an index of his intentions, it marked him villain. We know we are right now, for we are following the tracks of Captain Duncan's battery, who preceded us some two weeks. After leaving the Linares road, our course was nearly west, the country becoming higher, and opening into a beautiful prairie, picturesquely dotted with the mesquite, and a beautiful shrub of the acacia species. In the midst of the prairie, we met a Mexican with a cart-load of melons for the Matamoras market; he sold them in a minute, much to *his* delight and *our* refreshment.

Stopped "to noon" at a pond, near which was a mis-

erable "jacal." Two remarkably fine-looking Mexican women and a girl of eighteen gave us something to look at: the eldest was on her knees at the metat-stone, grinding corn, making it up into cakes, and baking *tortillas* upon a plate of sheet-iron. *Tortillas* are the universal food of the Mexicans. The process of making it is simple enough: the corn is soaked until the hull comes off, rendering it so soft that it is easily ground on the metat-stone with a stone roller. The metat is a species of burr-stone. The corn, as fast as ground, is made up into thin cakes, and immediately baked, making a very palatable bread; combined with milk, they are delicious. In this miserable building were relics of better days, in the shape of a glass candle-shade, and a plaster figure, a little boy, pencil in hand, writing on a tablet.

Our march from our noon halt to the camp for the night was a decided improvement. The ground was much drier, and, with the exception of a belt of chaparral, passing through which the heat was intense, through a beautiful prairie, in which we derived some comfort from a delightful breeze. We encamped at Maguella; one would think, from the name, it was a town, but it is the custom of the country to give names to simple ranchos, and generally to those which are used as camping places, from the fact of their having water. The proprietor of this lived at Matamoras: he owns, in one body, four leagues of land, and has quite a number of "peones" to cultivate it; some of the latter were beautiful girls. This "peone" system is fully equal to our slavery; work for the sake of redemption is sinfully held out to the former, and never thought of by the latter. The men suffered for the want of water: marched eighteen miles.



Interior of a "jacal."

August 7th. Our course has been west nearly all day. Passed over one beautiful prairie, the rest of the march being through open, and, at times, densely thick chaparral. The heat was intense, and the men suffered very much. I am free to confess, had not my pride come to my rescue, I should have given out. The greatest cause of suffering was want of water. No men in the world drink more water than soldiers, and you can not convince them a swallow is as refreshing as a good long drink; in their improvidence, they soon exhaust their canteens, and then commences their suffering. To those who have never felt the want of water in marching in an excessive hot day, God grant they may never experience it; to those who have, no description is necessary; they can duly appreciate it. Our guide was very ignorant of the route, and deceived us. Any one who is told it is only *one* league to water, and has to march *three*, can well imagine how exasperated we were against him. The men actually dropped down from thirst; the ground was so hot that it burned your feet, and the dense chaparral prevented our feeling the influence of the sea-breeze.

We marched eighteen miles, and encamped at a ranch called Cayetana. Shortly after we arrived, a number of pack-mules came in, laden with fruit from Saltillo. It was packed in crates, and intended for the Matamoras market. There were apples, pears, pomegranates, quinces, and grapes; the latter were very good, the rest miserable. Being picked green, and exposed for eleven days to the intense heat of the sun, they had lost all their flavor. The men bought them in great quantities, and at exorbitant prices. I had a long conversation with the head man of the train; he appeared quite intelligent, and very frank, answering

promptly all my questions. Being direct from Monterey, he had to answer *not a few* regarding the defenses of the city, troops, &c. He says there are two thousand men at Monterey, under General Mejia, and none at Saltillo or San Luis Potosi; that they are daily looking for our arrival via Camargo, and that there will be no fight.

The water at this camp is miserable—nothing more nor less than a hog-wallow. Water, no doubt, of the best kind could be obtained by digging; but these miserable creatures are too lazy for that. It is a great drawback to any thing like comfort. The inhabitants of the ranchos are particular in their inquiries whether the troops are regulars or volunteers. Some of the disgraceful rows, proceeding from a few disorganizers among the latter, have been “bruited” far and wide, establishing for that arm a reputation certainly not to be envied. The inhabitants of this ranch say the Mexican army, in their retreat, took every thing they could lay their hands upon, without paying for it. How different is our course of conduct. Here we are, invading an enemy’s country as conquerors, and yet levy not one cent; buy every thing; not only buy, but pay the most *exorbitant prices*. I sometimes doubt the good effects of such liberality. Will it not be their interest to continue a war which deprives them of nothing, but *adds* to their purses. However, we will always have the gratifying consolation of knowing we have brought no distress upon the poor. The country through which we have passed abounds in the wild pepper.

August 8th. Off at daybreak; for the first half mile marched through an avenue seventy-five yards broad, cut out of the dense chaparral by order of the government. It was left for some reason in an unfinished

state. Debouching from the chaparral, we ascended much higher ground, and, changing our course to the northwest, entered upon a beautiful rolling prairie. Thunder-storms passed all round us, cooling the air, making it the most pleasant march we have had. Vast numbers of, to me, strange flowers presented themselves, and the flowering acacia scented the air with its vanilla perfume: the flower is white and globular.

Stopped "to noon" at a ranch, where I saw the greatest number of fat, ugly girls sitting on the bed, tailor fashion, sewing, that I have ever seen in Mexico. One old woman was spinning yarn with a hand-spindle. No wonder they charge such exorbitant prices, if all that labor is bestowed upon spinning the wool. What would our Yankees, with all their machinery, think of this primitive manner of preparing the raw material. The yard was hung with pieces of raw-hide, stretched from posts, hung with jerked beef, of which we all took good care to lay in a plentiful supply. Encamped six miles beyond the rancho.

August 9th. Started at daybreak, intending to march four miles to Hacaletas, and rest for the day; but on our arrival the commanding officer changed his mind. After a short stop we again started, having the pleasant reflection that not a drop of water could be obtained for seventeen miles. We turned off due north from the Camargo road, to strike the Rio Grande at Reynosa. The face of the country almost immediately changed, the soil more loamy, and in many places quite sandy, the chaparral quite dense, and the ground rolling gradually at first, and increasing as we advanced. We soon struck an extensive district of limestone rock, and, emerging from a mesquite thicket, we descended quite a hill, thence into a large valley; passing through

it, we ascended on the other side, and within seven miles of Reynosa we passed over a succession of hills and valleys as far as the eye could reach; hills were overtopped by others, until they united in the crest of a mountain. The hills were of limestone formation, and ran in ridges toward the river. I was probably more struck with the beauty and grandeur of the scenery from the fact of having been separated so long from any thing like a mountain or valley, among which my boyhood's early days were spent. The men suffered excessively, the heat was intense, and their thirst was only increased by their knowledge of the fact that no water could be obtained. A league off we saw the belfry of the Cathedral. It was to us like a sail to a shipwrecked mariner; it inspired hope, made those who were cheerful still happier, and braced up the weary.

We encamped above the town, on the banks of the river, at half past 3 P.M., having marched twenty-one miles. Directly after sunset I strolled up to the town. It is beautifully situated on a high bluff, which runs almost to the river. Some rich bottom-land intervenes, the cultivation of which added to the attractions of the place. The Plaza is on the summit of the ridge. The town boasts of a Cathedral, with two discordant bells, which, just as I entered the square, were tolled for vespers. At the first sound, all heads were uncovered in mute and silent adoration of that Being to whom we owe our existence. There was something in the act which at the time struck me with awe. At that moment, in different parts of the world, millions of God's creatures were performing the same act of adoration. All the buildings of any pretension presented a dilapidated or unfinished appearance. Many have been

commenced on a grand scale, and suddenly stopped, looking as if the proprietors had suddenly changed their mind, failed, or died; and yet this very dilapidation adds to, and throws around them an interest of which they would otherwise be dispossessed. Beyond the Plaza most of the buildings are the common "jacal." Those of any pretensions are built of limestone; it is the soft lime, which indurates by exposure to the air, and which, when fresh from the quarry, can be sawed into any shape. On nearly every street you find quantities of the stone ready for building, giving evidence that at one time there existed an intention of pushing forward the improvements of the place with vigor, which now only remain as monuments of their imbecility and want of enterprise. It is very clean; they can not help themselves in this respect if they would; for Providence, in his kindness, sends rain, which washes off every thing like filth. The women were well formed, rather good-looking, and unusually tidy in their appearance. It is quite ancient, and contains about two thousand inhabitants. It was named after General Reynosa, an officer in the Mexican army. Captain Swartwout, with his company of the 2d Artillery, garrisons the place.

August 10th. To-day has been one of the most scorching hot days I have ever felt. The colonel decided not to start until the afternoon, to march nine miles, and encamp. Our course was due west; the road for the first three miles was through the river bottom, and was, of course, not uninteresting; then it became rolling, gradually more and more so, until we struck hills. From the top of one we had a beautiful view of Reynosa, about six miles off, whose white walls were displayed to great advantage. From this point

we continued to ascend, having pretty and extensive views to the right and left. The hills were composed chiefly of limestone, covered with a dense growth of chaparral, the soil being of little value. The road was excellent. In the descent we crossed over beds of gravel, the peculiar color of which gave evidence of the presence of iron.

The crowning feature of to-day's march was the magnificent view which broke upon us from the summit and during the descent; I think it one of the most picturesque, slightly touched with the grand, I have ever seen. The Valley of the Rio Grande stretched before us for several miles; one intricate web of hills and valleys fenced it in, and in the distance a line of mountains placed a barrier to the eye. Immediately beneath us slept, in all its luxuriant quietness and repose, the river, which, seen in stretches, had the appearance of so many lakes imbedded in green foliage. The smoke from several ranchos curled gently and lazily upward, giving evidence of the presence of civilization; and a steam-boat—a *high-pressure steam-boat*—true emblem of an American, lay moored at the bank, disturbing nature's rich and solemn silence by lazily working off its surplus steam. Add to this the long line of covered wagons—the troops, upon whose bayonets the sunbeams glistened, marching on their winding way, and you have a picture rarely surpassed. As we descended the hill-side, the limbs of the chaparral were so thickly covered with snails that at first they looked like white flowers: it is a common sight to see the little animals in such numbers.

We encamped at the foot of the hill, in the vicinity of quite a number of ranchos. In one, two families resided, having between them seventeen children, the

eldest of whom was not over eleven. The mother of eight did not look over twenty-five. In a neighboring inclosure the goats were equally numerous. As we left Reynosa we passed the burial-ground, "El Campo Santo." It is surrounded by a wall made of small pieces of limestone; in the center are three cubes of stone, each smaller than the other, and on the top of them a cross; at its base are arranged several skulls. They continue burying in the same place, and must, of course, disinter some for the benefit of others.

August 11th. Started at daybreak, but, owing to the difficulty of passing a slough, did not get under way until the sun had risen, which made the march oppressively hot. Our course continued west, through the river bottom, where the thick undergrowth forbade the access of air. The soil was generally of the richest character. Passed several respectable ranchos, and had more water than on any other day's march. Nine miles off, passed Reynosa Vijo—old Reynosa. It is a collection of indifferent "jacals." We stopped to rest for a few moments. The moment we halt, milk and tortillas are offered for sale. Three miles further on, passed a *running* stream; it was enough to drive one into an extravagance of joy. There was nothing but the *running* at all *taking*; for it was muddy, warm, and coursed its way through uninteresting lowlands.

August 12th. The colonel very sensibly decided to alter his time of marching. Troops can not march in this country during the heat of day; the march should be made between 12 at night and 10 in the morning. Reveille was ordered at 12, and the line of march was taken up at 1 A.M. It was a bright, moonlight night. The tramp of the column, and the dull, heavy rolling of the artillery, disturbed the romantic stillness of the

hour. The mesquite-trees have increased in size, and the deceptive light of the moon would have caused a stranger to think we were marching through a peach-orchard. The exertion to keep awake was really painful; this "turning night into the day" causes nature to *rebel*, yet it was much better than to cause it to be *roasted*. Passed a great many crosses by the road side; also two conical stone structures, in shape like a sugar-loaf, about five feet high and three feet through the base, all of which marked the spot where murders had been committed. Marched twelve miles by 9 A.M., bringing the men in comparatively fresh. For the amusement of some of the officers, I gave them a description of my trip to New Orleans last June, and, as it was the cause of my meeting rather an original character, and having no small amount of fun, I will not be selfish enough to deprive my readers of the full benefit of

"THE GEORGIA DOCTOR."

During a trip to the good city of New Orleans, on the steamer *Fashion*, it was my good fortune to be an eye-witness of the most infinite succession of "*saws*," run upon a would-be doctor from Georgia, that ever fell to the lot of any one "human." He was an undoubted specimen of the piney wood genus—a tall, light-haired, blue-eyed, fair-complexioned Georgian. He hailed from the upper part of the state, *somewhere near Buncombe*, and evidently had been favored with the least imaginable intercourse with the world. Where he graduated, or from whom he obtained his diploma, is no part of my ken. He gloried in the title of *doctor*, and it was this title, and the benefits arising from the practice of the profession, which induced him to venture forth into the world, and, as he said, to "take a look at Texas, and see what was to be done in the medicine

line in that country." He had "heard tell it was *some* for making money or doctoring, and he had no objection to try his hand." It appears that, after arriving in the land of promise, and looking around him, he decided upon settling upon some point on the Brasos.

"Well, doctor, how did you like the country? did the practice meet your expectation?"

"As for the country, stranger, that's all well enough; the soil is rich, and raises amazing fine crops; but when you speak of health, thar you have me! I had, sure enough, determined to settle and practice, and send for the wife and children; but when summer-time came, I saw enough."

"Well, doctor, what did you see? you did not 'see the elephant?'"

"Not *edzactly* the elephant, but something which might be called awfully close to it. I tell you, when I came to practice round among the neighbors, and see their yaller, sunken faces, I concluded it did not take long for *their blood to turn to bile*; and thinks I to myself, that would be too much risky practice to suit my taste; and so I decided to pack up and put back for Georgia, high up, where we have hills, and some of the purest white sand-water that ever was drank. Just as I was about starting, this cursed war broke out, and nothing would do but I must go surgeon to one of the regiments. It was agin the grain, any how, for I have no particular taste for this *army* fighting. When it comes to the *regular native* knock down, drag out, and gouge, I'm '*some punkins*;' but the case is pretty considerably altered when you are placed just so that the very next moment a—a cannon ball may come along, a whizzing and tearing, and knock your head into a *mummu*, and scatter the well-stored larnin' of years, in

a moment, to d—d smash! Go it I did; but I'd made up my mind that Point Isabel should be the termination of my campaign. Upon my arrival thar, before the regiment moved, I made out 'to come it over the colonel,' and got my discharge, and you now see me on the Fashion, traveling straight home to the mountains of Georgia, with little chance of ever leaving them again."

This was a short sketch he gave me of his history on the first evening. Little did the poor fellow know what was in store for him the next day. In the morning, while at the breakfast-table, with evident alarm upon his face, he sang out,

"Well, captain, have you heard what's happened? The captain of this craft has lost his way—has run eighty miles back in the night—don't know where he is—the boat's a leaking, and we are in a devil of a fix!"

I looked around the table, and saw a smile upon every face. I instantly saw there was a joke on foot, and determined, *pour passer le temps*, to lend my hand in amusing ("God save the mark," if you call that amusement) the gentleman.

"What! captain lost his way! ran backward! boat leaking! my God! you don't say so!"

"No mistake, captain (this said with the greatest enthusiasm); it's all true; and, besides, they say the captain is a d—d rascal, and would give us up to pirates rather than not; as for the boat's leaking, I saw it myself (the engineer had been bribed to throw water from the engine into the hold), and it comes in the *all-firedest* stream—oh! that I was back home, a hugging my wife and children!"

As the day wore on, he became perfectly nervous; every one added their quota to plague him. The re-