

The next dance many of the officers took partners, and tried to introduce an *Americanized fandango*; but, however willing the girls were, their utter ignorance of our style made it *no go*. The next, I selected the belle; but, with all my accurate calling off, we made another failure. I was in duty bound to entertain my partner; I knew nothing of the language, but, having picked up a word or two, I thought I would make the best use of them. So, believing the coast all clear, I thought I would experiment, and softly whispered, "A bueno nocés, señorita"—meaning to tell her that it was a very pretty night; when, right at my elbow, I heard the jocular voice of Captain M. "Well done, G., what's that? try it again." My Spanish evaporated like the dew from before the sun, and, spite of myself, I had to join in a hearty laugh. However, I did not make such a bad hit, after all, for they do not expect to be entertained, and, if you spoke, the chances are they would not reply. The more we became mixed up and confused, the greater the pleasure of the crowd; for every *extraordinary effort*, "*mucho bueno*" saluted us from all quarters. I left them in a gale of spirits. Having to march at daybreak, I wanted some sleep.

September 9th. The 1st Division of the army, under General Twiggs, marched for Ceralvo. General Taylor and staff preceded us. The morning was beautifully clear, and a cool north wind made one realize the fall had arrived. The face of the country was more level than any we have passed over since leaving Mier. Crossed two swift-running streams. As we approached Ceralvo the mountains became more interesting. The land in the vicinity of Ceralvo is well cultivated; our course was more to the south. We marched past the camp of the 2d Division, and took

our position on the right at 12 o'clock, having marched fifteen miles. The town is situated in a beautiful valley, partly upon the side of a white limestone hill; but the larger portion is in a beautiful level at its base, through which courses a bold, running stream, winding its noisy way through the town, and carrying water by artificial ditches into the yard of every family. The houses are low, with "azotéa" roofs, built of "adobes" of a blue color, which imparts a very pleasing effect; some are built of blue limestone, and all are little fortresses within themselves. Nearly every house has a garden, surrounded by a wall. The fig, peach, and pomegranate are in the greatest abundance; besides the yards, the banks of the stream are lined with them, and the lemon, orange, and peccan. The latter are immense trees, covering a great deal of ground, inviting one to enjoy their cool and delightful shade: one of them must have measured five feet through. The Plaza is large and clean: the steeple of the unfinished Cathedral had more pretensions to architectural beauty than any I have yet seen. It is decidedly the neatest and most picturesque town I have noted; that bold, clear, cool stream flowing through it, and bridged in every direction, is of itself beautiful. It is impossible to feel the heat; for, if the house is disagreeable, take a water-melon, go under that huge peccan, rest thyself beside that rushing, bubbling stream, and you'll *all but freeze*. Its population is between one thousand and fifteen hundred. The valley appears to be surrounded by mountains. Far off in the west we see the mountains of Monterey, and they tower *so far* above these we have so long had in view that these may be considered *little ones*.

We are in the vicinity of the silver mines of Ceral-

vo, which are considered quite rich. The Indians have been such a scourge to this country, they have not only prevented its settlement, but have stopped the working of the mines. At the foot of the hill upon which we are encamped is the same bold, running stream which courses its way through the town, fed by innumerable springs, which gush out every few yards from its base. It flows through a green flat of land, two hundred yards broad, and in its center are immense cypress-trees, which, at a distance, look like the elm, so rich and feathery is their foliage. The majority of the army now believe there will be a fight. General Worth, through means of spies, has received information on which he relies. Ampudia certainly arrived at Monterey on the 31st August, and assumed command. He is said to have at least five thousand regulars, and any number of rancheros. If he has ten thousand men, I think he will make a stand; but this we think is sure, *no matter what their numbers, we will whip them.* A few days since we received a report that Colonel Harney was at Monclova; it appears now that he never crossed the Rio Grande; the men objected to proceeding any further, and he returned to San Antonio.

September 11th. Information was received to-day that a guard which Colonel Harney had left at the Presidio crossing, on the Rio Grande, had been attacked by the Mexicans, and all either killed or taken prisoners. General Butler, with the 1st Brigade of Volunteers (1st Ohio, Colonel Mitchell, 1st Kentucky, Colonel Ormsby), arrived on the 10th. On the 11th General Taylor issued his orders for the march. The 1st Division moves on the 13th, the 2d Division on the 14th, and the Volunteer Division on the 15th. All the pioneers are placed under the command of Captain L. S. Craig, who

will leave with them to-morrow, escorted by a squadron of Dragoons under Captain Graham. Captain McCullough's company accompanies them. Reports are still arriving of the numbers collecting at Monterey, and of their determination to resist us. The fighting stock is on the rise. The report of one day may contradict the next; nevertheless, on the *last day*, we'll try to unravel and get them all right. With this premise, I'll give the camp rumors of to-day. The last spy in from Monterey brought so vivid, and, apparently, accurate a description, that a map was made by one of the staff of General Worth. From the map, one would think we are to have tight work. *Fires from advanced batteries, enfilading fires from the old Cathedral direct, and all sorts of fires from the Bishop's Palace,* made some of the old ones even, to say nothing of the volunteers, open their eyes. They go on to say, no matter what preparations they have made, they have unaccountably neglected to fortify a hill which commands the town. With the comfortable picture of *that* hill, I will try to sleep soundly.

September 12th. Captain Craig and escort left. Fighting fever on the increase.

September 13th. First Division, under General Twiggs, marched at daybreak. General Taylor and staff accompanied it. The "tug of war" has now commenced, and the Rubicon may be put down as passed. It was my luck to be left in command of the rear-guard; and as I had to wait until the supply-train had passed, I had the extreme felicity of being broiled in the sun until 2 P.M., when, if dinner had been announced, I might have been served as a *rare dish*. General Quitman, with his brigade (1st Mississippi Regiment, Colonel Davis, 1st Tennessee, Colonel Camp-

bell), arrived at 11 o'clock. Our course was more to the south, and parallel with the mountains. Passed several bold, running creeks, dashing over pebbly bottoms, in which it was a luxury to stand and cool your feet. The heat was excessive; the sun blistering hot. Thunder-showers had been holding a general gathering throughout the day upon the mountain-tops. One passed over us; we were soaked, but it was as refreshing as the spring to the traveler in the desert. On most of the route the land was quite rocky; that bordering the streams very rich.

Passed only one ranch. A boy and man came out to meet the command; the former with a large gourd full of milk, the latter with tortillas, as the men said, *baked in the sun*; truly, I believe they were. I halted my company, and the boy and man were relieved of their loads before you could turn round. As we ascended, we met with a luxuriant growth of the Spanish bayonet; some to the height of twenty feet, and one foot in diameter; at a distance its bark looked like that of the oak. The character of the chaparral has changed; various beautiful shrubs are seen; one, having white leaves, looking much like the ice-plant, with a profusion of delicate pink flowers, can not fail to attract attention and admiration. The Mexicans call it *cinosa*; it covers the sides and tops of the mountains, and at a distance gives them a bare appearance. The ebony tree grows in this region.

Following behind the train, I had an opportunity of seeing a great deal of the arrieros. There are no happier fellows in existence; their shrill whistle, and constant, sharp cry of "mula!" can not fail to amuse the novice. One of them was singing most cheerily the whole afternoon. If the load (called *cargo*) becomes

the least deranged, it is inconceivable with what rapidity the mule is stopped, blinded, cargo readjusted, and the animal turned loose.

The rain made the atmosphere quite cool. We did not reach camp until dusk. Just before reaching it, we crossed a bold, running stream, which made us rather too cold. A camp-fire was delightful, and a hot supper awaiting us still more so. Perhaps some of my readers have had the annoyance of playing rear-guard, in a broiling hot day, to some three hundred mules, and, coming into camp wet and fatigued, find a nice supper of chickens and boiled rice, and a hot cup of coffee ready for them? No! Then they can not appreciate it; but I can tell them it is *monstrous* good, and surpasses, for a time, turtle soup and oysters, to those enjoying the luxury of a city life. When I was a lad, I despised a "drum-stick" from the bottom of my heart (papas have a particular and amiable weakness for giving the little fellows at the side-table that sinewy morsel, the drum-stick of a turkey); but if any one had seen me take the *last* in the dish, when I was particularly asked, and the *gusto* with which I enjoyed it, it would have been good for delicate appetites. To dry ourselves we had a cheerful fire, and under its benign influence were made very happy.

September 14th. Started at daybreak. Last evening a report was sent in from the advance (at least it was so reported to us, and, like all camp rumors, turned out to be incorrect) that four thousand of the enemy were twelve miles in advance. The word "go!" could not be more inspiring to the race-horse than the news to us. Every man cracked his joke, and had them, in imagination, whipped, prisoners, or in full flight before evening! Every preparation was made to meet

them. We had not marched far before the truth was known; the same cavalry which had been previously reported had again been seen by the advance. Our course has been more westerly, gradually ascending through a valley, between two ranges of mountains, toward the gorge of the main Sierra. We have approached very near to the mountains, and have a more minute view of them; they are thickly clad with chaparral and the delicate cinosa, and are composed of a succession of conical peaks, rising one higher than the other, until they terminate in the bold and ragged outline of the crest. The valley is intersected by small ridges, and many fine, running streams; the road is quite rocky, and hard upon the men and animals.

Captain McCullough, with thirty-five of his men, had a little affair to-day with some of the enemy's cavalry, supposed to number two hundred. They passed a few shots, resulting in wounding two Mexicans, and a horse of one of the captain's men. It is astonishing the enemy did not charge them; they formed for that purpose, but afterward slowly retired. This occurred near the small village of Ramos. In the village the captain saw the two men he had wounded, and took one prisoner, who was brought to the general. He was closely questioned, and stated there were only a few troops at Monterey, and they would not fight us; he was then released. On our march we passed a ranch which was deserted; two pigs and some chickens were the only evidence of its having been inhabited for years. Some of the people say they were driven away against their inclination. Marched 14 miles.

September 15th. Our course to-day has been a little to the south of west, and surrounded by mountain scenery never surpassed in beauty. With an amphi-

theater of mountains, we have been passing through a succession of beautiful valleys, each inclosed by smaller hills, and they, again, backed by towering mountains, so that the ever-varying scene has not tired, but kept one's senses keenly alive to all its beauties. Language can hardly depict them, especially those of the mountains, in whose rugged features were revealed new charms by every change of light. A succession of bold, rugged cliffs, conical peaks, some terminating in jagged points, with their white sides glistening in the sun, perfectly stripped of all verdure; magnificent clouds curled up, and, nestling in the ravines and on the mountaintops, made one (regardless of the fatigues of the march) exclaim, "Nothing like this, in grandeur or loveliness, have I ever seen!" The soil in the valleys is very good. About eight miles from camp we passed the summit, and then commenced our descent into the valley in which the village of Ramos is situated. Near Ramos we overtook the pioneers. From the summit the view was very extensive and beautiful; for three miles our division could be seen wending its way through the valley and up the hill-sides.

Just before reaching Ramos we passed one of the boldest and deepest mountain-torrents I have yet seen. We soon entered the village. It is beautifully situated, but has a most dilapidated appearance; most of the houses were the common mud-hut; some were of stone; and one was pierced with large holes, as if for defense. Nearly every yard has a great quantity of fruit-trees: grapes, figs, pomegranates, and oranges.

"The air was heavy with the sighs of orange groves."

The enemy's cavalry had driven nearly all the respectable people out of the place, carrying off the alcalde and the padre. Saw some beautiful specimens

of calcareous spar and gypsum; the general formation is limestone. No better natural road was ever found. We approached Marin over a beautiful level mesquite plain, and entered the town by a slight descent, it being situated on another table-land, rising abruptly from the Valley of the San Juan. The town, as usual, has its grand Plaza, containing about an acre of ground, surrounded by a very indifferent-looking Cathedral, and other low stone buildings, with azotéa roofs. The streets run perpendicularly with each other; there is hardly a building worthy of description. I examined the residence of the alcalde; it had a large court-yard; ascending two flights of stairs, you entered a long room with an earthen floor; the lower part of the wall was painted red, with festoons of flowers, supported by hideously-deformed cupids. Ascending three steps, you walk out upon a flat roof, from which you have a fine view.

The town contains about two thousand inhabitants. As we approached it, the scenery, if possible, became more beautiful and grand—mountains upon whichever side you turned; the valley completely hemmed in, except where an occasional opening in the mountains gave you a beautiful prospect beyond. The mountains of Monterey, at whose base the city is situated, were distinctly visible in the west. The "Mitre Mountain" and the "Camanche Saddle" stand in bold relief; the latter takes its name from its resemblance to the saddle used by that tribe of Indians. It was at this little town it was predicted we would have a fight, and many would have bet upon it. No enemy presented themselves. When we marched through the town, it was nearly deserted; a death-like, painful silence reigned throughout; most of the houses were closed

and barred. It was a deserted village. One might judge, on a miniature scale, what were Napoleon's feelings while riding through the deserted streets of Moscow. When our advance arrived, the enemy had left; their cavalry had been previously seen lining one street and the Plaza, and were computed at a thousand. They are under the command of General Torrejon, and bivouacked in the city last night. Previous to their departure they drove nearly all the citizens out of the town, and, as usual, carried with them the public functionaries. They appear to delight in annoying the people; unable, or too cowardly to protect them, they take pleasure in driving them from their homes, and causing them to endure all the evils and sufferings they can possibly inflict, hoping, I presume, by such means to stir up within them a hatred for, and opposition to us, which *they* in their hearts possess, but have not the courage to display. Most of the people fled to the chaparral; but after we passed through, and before we encamped, a few commenced returning. I saw some leading back pigs which they had tied and taken with them; others driving goats, and some returning on horse and mule back—men, women, and children, some three deep, on the same animal.

On the 14th September General Torrejon had a man shot as a spy in the grave-yard for holding communication with General Taylor. He carried off with him the man taken prisoner at Ramos, and released by General T. He intends shooting him. It is a pity if the fellow is to be shot; it could not be for telling *the truth*; for I will venture to say the general has little of that communicated to him; "the truth is not in them." He cares very little about it; to Monterey he is going, if twenty thousand men oppose him! Decision of pur-

pose, which he possesses in an eminent degree, and which is so essential for an invading general, is one of the best points in his character; it is that which will carry him triumphant wherever he goes. We are now within twenty-five miles of the long-looked-for, much-talked-about city. We will remain two days to concentrate the forces.

September 16th. From a Mexican, taken last night, the general squeezed out the following information: There are nine thousand men at the city, six thousand rancheros and three thousand regulars. The latter are the remains of the army we whipped on the 8th and 9th of May; the former swear they will not fight, and the latter they will. This little town can boast of most lovely scenery. The valley through which the river flows is quite level, covered with a rich growth of grass, affording ample grazing for any number of cattle. The mountains spring up directly from its plain; to the west, three passes opening through the mountains are striking features in the landscape, as viewed from town. The sunset this evening was gorgeously beautiful. This valley is capable of supporting an immense population, and ere long its banks will teem with rich harvests. This country comes nearer the idea of *fairy-land* than any of which I have ever conceived an opinion. All the good people of the north must think of it as such, for it *really* is so; and then they can people it and dress it up to suit their fancies. I will only add, if you give your imagination the rein, you will barely realize it. General Worth, with the 2d Division, arrived to-day. General Henderson, with his command of Texas cavalry, is expected to-morrow, unless they have decided to follow the example of the Rifle Regiment, and take their discharge.

September 17th. Early in the morning I rode up to town for the purpose of making a minute examination of it. Fortunately, I found the Cathedral open, and ascended a spiral stair-case, inclosed in a masonry tower, upon which the belfry rests. I soon emerged upon the top. The view was magnificent, but, owing to the unusually hazy atmosphere, not as distinct as could have been desired. Before this elevated view I had no conception of the breadth of the Valley of the San Juan; it can not be less than fifteen miles. At the base of the mountains, to the southwest, I could distinctly see Monterey. I was surprised, for I had no idea it was visible; and then it looked so near, I could not credit it was twenty-five miles distant. The Bishop's Palace looked like a fortified place, and the city appeared to cover a great deal of ground; of course, every thing was very indistinct, yet very interesting, as all our hopes are at present concentrated upon that spot. This Cathedral is unfinished; it is built in the shape of a cross, and has very few decorations. Their patron saint, and other holy figures, occupied conspicuous positions in niches over the altar. The roof is made of a lime cement, and beautifully graduated to turn rain; on one end was a sun-dial. The ceiling was twenty feet high, composed of massive beams of timber, and laid with plank, meeting in angles.

The camp has been full of all sorts of rumors—first fight, and then no fight. A reputed deserter made his appearance, fresh from the trenches, and reported there was no doubt we would be resisted—that the most extensive preparations were made; thereupon the *fight-ites* rose; then, again, a report contradictory of the former, and the fever would subside. In the evening, General Taylor received a communication from the

Spanish consul at Monterey, asking whether the property of foreigners would be respected. The general replied, he could not be responsible for any thing if the city was taken by assault. General Ampudia has distributed along the road a printed proclamation, calling upon the men and officers of our army to desert, and stigmatizing the war as anti-Christian. He offers them protection, good pay, and equal rank in the Mexican service. How ignorant he must be of the character of the American soldier to think, for a moment, his offer could provoke other than a feeling of disgust. The volunteer division, under General Butler, arrived today. Captain Craig was relieved from the pioneers, the road being good ahead. The order for the march is out; we move to-morrow morning. In case line of battle is formed, Twigg's Division will be on the right, the Volunteers in the center, and Worth's on the left.

Rode to the city to enjoy one more sunset; it certainly was perfectly lovely. The sun setting behind a mountain, threw its body in a deep, dark blue shade, while it illuminated the jutting peaks with golden light. Some of them looked transparent. It was a rich, rich scene—soft and melancholy; one calculated to inspire none but the purest emotions of the heart; one that made you feel like drawing around you your family and friends to drink in its beauties, and never wish to leave them. My God! what a spot on which to build a palace, in whose western windows one could sit every evening and enjoy the gorgeous scenery!

CHAPTER XIV.

SEPTEMBER 18th. The first division of the army marched at 8 o'clock; the others followed, with an hour's intermission. The scenery was similar to that already described, save the ground was more rolling than it appeared from Marin. The valley is made up of gentle undulations, broad, level plains; the whole backed by huge mountains, whose cliffs are of a pink color in the morning's sun. The water of the San Juan was very cold, and wading it at early dawn was not very agreeable.

Eight miles from Marin passed a small stream called Agua Frio. Its banks were high, bottom rocky, some slate formations visible, and I have no doubt coal could be found. Quite a number of houses, I suppose the cabins of the peones attached to the hacienda, lined the banks. The "lord of the manor" had, for this country, quite a showy and extensive establishment. In his court-yard was seen one of those old Spanish coaches, heavy enough for six mules, and capable of containing a whole family. Its *tout ensemble* proved the owner a man of some pretensions. An Irishman, upon seeing it, exclaimed, "Och, but we're gettin' into civilization! Be Jabers! there's an omnibus!" A good many of the inhabitants came out to see us.

About three miles beyond the Agua Frio we reached the hacienda San Francisco, where we encamped. Just as our advance entered, the cavalry of the enemy left, and were in sight when we turned off to take our campground. Many thought the enemy were in front in