

And here, before describing this unique venture of the exploration by a battalion with a wagon train, of the unknown wilderness which must be passed to reach California, it will serve the unities of place, and nearly of time, to pause, and to record the completion of the conquest of New Mexico. For there soon occurred an uprising against our bloodless, but perhaps stern change of rule, which had found temporary success, chiefly, it is believed, through an audacious surprise. And it proved that the best traits of our nature at a low stage, combine with the forces of ignorance and confirmed customs and habits, to resent and resist an abrupt and forcible bestowal of the greatest boons—the comforts of civilization—Liberty itself!

II.

THE INSURRECTION IN NEW MEXICO
AND THE FINAL CONQUEST.

ABOUT the middle of December, Colonel Price, Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers, left in command by Colonel Doniphan, received information that efforts to excite a general revolt were being made. A former officer of the Mexican army was arrested, and a list of all the disbanded Mexican soldiers was found on his person. Then many others, supposed to be implicated, were arrested; but the two leaders, Ortiz and Archuleta, made their escape to the South. A full investigation revealed that many of the most influential persons in the northern part of the territory were engaged in the conspiracy. But these prompt measures seemed to be effectual in preventing an insurrection.

Charles Bent, the Governor, appointed by General Kearny, was an able man; amiable, and married to a native of the country, he was considered quite

popular; January 14th he left Santa Fè to visit his family at San Fernando de Taos,—near the Pueblo de Taos, about seventy miles north of Santa Fè, and near the top of the great southern promontory of the Rocky Mountains. There, January 19th, the governor, the sheriff, the circuit attorney, the prefect and two others, were “murdered in the most inhuman manner that savages could devise.” The same day seven Americans were also murdered at Arroyo Hondo, and two others on the Rio Colorado. The prefect, Vigil, was a New Mexican; and the intention was apparent to murder every one who had accepted office under American rule.

Colonel Price received this startling news at Santa Fè the next day, and at the same time intercepted letters calling upon the people of the lower river for aid; he heard also of the approach, from the north, of a constantly swelling force of insurgents.

The Colonel immediately dispatched orders to Albuquerque, to Major Edmonson, to march up and occupy Santa Fè; and to Captain Burgwin of the first dragoons, to march north, with one of his troops to join him in the field. The Colonel marched,

January 23d, at the head of only three hundred and fifty men, to meet the rebels; this force was all infantry or dismounted cavalry, except a troop which volunteered in Santa Fè under Felix St. Vrain, and also four twelve pound mountain howitzers. It included Captain Angney's little battalion, which so gallantly contended with the cavalry for the lead in the invasion of the Territory.

Next day Captain St. Vrain, in advance, encountered the enemy on heights commanding the road, near the town of Cañada, and also occupying some strong adobe houses at the base of the hills. Price formed line, and advanced the howitzers, which opened fire. A detachment of the enemy made a movement to cut off our baggage train, then more than a mile to the rear; the manœuvre being observed, Captain St. Vrain was sent to counteract it, and succeeded in bringing up the train.

After a sharp cannonade, Price ordered Angney's battalion to assault the nearest houses, from which issued a galling fire on his right flank; the houses were handsomely carried; a general charge was then made; the artillery and three companies assaulted successfully several houses in a grove from

which a sharp fire had been kept up; and St. Vrain commenced a movement to gain the enemy's rear. In a short time the enemy were in full flight, and Cañada was occupied.

Our loss was two men killed, and a lieutenant and six men wounded. The insurgents, estimated at fifteen hundred in number, left thirty-six killed.

Next morning the New Mexicans showed in some force on the distant heights, but on the approach of a detachment, sent to attack them, soon disappeared.

Colonel Price advanced up the Rio del Norte as far as Luceros, and early on the 28th, was joined there by Captain Burgwin,—who brought his dismounted company by forced marches,—by an additional company of his own regiment, mounted, and also by Lieut. Wilson, First Dragoons, with a six pounder, which had been sent for.

On the 29th, with about four hundred and eighty rank and file, Colonel Price advanced to La Joya, and there learned that a party of the enemy occupied a very strong pass or cañon, leading to Embudo, but on a country road that was impracticable for artillery and wagons; he therefore detached

Captain Burgwin with three companies, including St. Vrain's, to attack them and force a passage. Capt. Burgwin found the enemy six or seven hundred strong, on the sides of the mountains at the narrowest part of the gorge; they were protected by dense masses of cedar trees, and large fragments of rock. He dismounted St. Vrain's company, and sent it to attack the slopes on the left, and a second company those to the right. Both companies advanced rapidly in open order, firing with much execution, and the enemy soon fled with a speed that defied all pursuit. Capt. Burgwin marched through the defile into the open valley, and then occupied Embudo without opposition. Our loss was one killed and one severely wounded; both of St. Vrain's company. The insurgents' loss was reported twenty killed and sixty wounded.

On the 30th, Burgwin marched to Trampas, where he was joined next day by Price, when the whole force marched to Chamisola.

February 1st, the summit of the mountain was reached, and the next day the command quartered in the small village of Rio Chiquito, at the entrance to the valley of Taos. These two marches were

through snow so deep that the troops had to break the track for the artillery and wagons; many of the men were frost bitten.

February 3d, Price marched through Fernando de Taos to the Pueblo, which he found strongly fortified. It was enclosed by formidable walls and strong pickets; within the enclosure and near the northern and southern walls were two large buildings of irregular pyramidal form, seven or eight stories in height, each capable of sheltering five or six hundred men. Besides these and similar smaller buildings, a large church was situated in the northwest angle, with a narrow passage between it and the outer wall. The exterior walls and all the enclosed buildings were pierced for rifles; every point of the exterior walls was flanked by projecting buildings.

The western flank of the church was selected for attack, and at 2 P. M., Lieut. Dyer, of the Ordnance Department, opened fire from the battery at about two hundred and fifty yards. The fire by the six pounder, and howitzers was kept up about two hours, when, as the ammunition wagon had not come up, and the troops were suffering from cold

and fatigue, the forces were withdrawn to San Fernando.

Colonel Price reported—"Early on the morning of the fourth, I again advanced upon Pueblo. Posting the dragoons under Captain Burgwin about two hundred and sixty yards from the western flank of the church, I ordered the mounted men under Captains St. Vrain and Slack, to a position on the opposite side of the town, whence they could discover and intercept any fugitive who might attempt to escape towards the mountains, or in the direction of San Fernando. The residue of the troops took ground about three hundred yards from the northern wall. Here, too, Lieut. Dyer established himself with the six pounder and two howitzers, while Lt. Hassendaubel, of Major Clark's battalion light artillery, remained with Captain Burgwin, in command of two howitzers. By this arrangement a cross-fire was obtained, sweeping the front and eastern flank of the church.

"All these arrangements being made, the batteries opened upon the town at nine o'clock A. M. At eleven o'clock, finding it impossible to breach the walls of the church with the six pounder and how-

itzers, I determined to storm the building. At a signal, Captain Burgwin, at the head of his own company, and that of Captain McMillin, charged the western flank of the church, while Captain Angney, infantry battalion, and Captain Barber and Lieutenant Boon, Second Mo. Mounted Volunteers, charged the northern wall. As soon as the troops above mentioned, had established themselves under the western wall of the church, axes were used in the attempt to breach it; and a temporary ladder having been made, the roof was fired. About this time Captain Burgwin, at the head of a small party, left the cover afforded by the flank of the church, and penetrating into the corral in front of that building, endeavored to force the door. In this exposed situation, Captain Burgwin received a severe wound, which deprived me of his valuable services, and of which he died on the 7th instant. Lieutenants McIlvaine, First U. S. Dragoons, and Royall and Lackland, Second Regiment Volunteers, accompanied Captain Burgwin into the corral; but the attempt on the church door proved fruitless, and they were compelled to retire behind the wall. In the mean time small holes had been cut in the

western wall, and shells were thrown in by hand, doing good execution. The six pounder was now brought around by Lieutenant Wilson, who at the distance of two hundred yards, poured a heavy fire of grape into the town. The enemy during all of this time kept up a destructive fire upon our troops. About half past three o'clock, the six pounder was run up within sixty yards of the church, and after ten rounds, one of the holes which had been cut with the axes was widened into a practicable breach. The storming party, among whom were Lieutenant Dyer of the ordnance, and Lieutenants Wilson and Taylor, First dragoons, entered and took possession of the church, without opposition. The interior was filled with dense smoke, but for which circumstance our storming party would have suffered great loss. A few of the enemy were seen in the gallery, where an open door admitted the air, but they retired without firing a gun. The troops left to support the battery on the north, were now ordered to charge on that side. The enemy abandoned the western part of the town. Many took refuge in the large houses on the east, while others endeavored to escape toward the mountains. These

latter were pursued by the mounted men under Captain Slack and St. Vrain, who killed fifty-one of them, only two or three men escaping. It was now night, and our troops were quietly quartered in the houses which the enemy had abandoned. On the next morning the enemy sued for peace, and thinking the severe loss they had sustained would prove a salutary lesson, I granted their supplication, on the condition that they should deliver up to me Tomas,—one of their principal men, who had instigated and been actively engaged in the murder of Governor Bent and others. The number of the enemy at the battle of Pueblo de Taos was between six and seven hundred. Of these about one hundred and fifty were killed—wounded not known. Our own loss was seven killed and forty-five wounded; many of the wounded have since died.

“The principal leaders in this insurrection were Tafoya, Pablo Chavis, Pablo Montoya, Cortez and Tomas, a Pueblo Indian. Of these, Tafoya was killed at Cañada; Chavis was killed at Pueblo; Montoya was hanged at Don Fernando on the 7th instant, and Tomas was shot by a private while in the guard room at the latter town. Cortez is still at large.

This person was at the head of rebels in the valley of the Mora.”

Thus in the prime of life, James H. K. Burgwin of North Carolina, captain in First Regiment of Dragoons, fell in the brave performance of duty. He was accomplished, amiable, and much beloved.

It was lamentable that the Pueblos should in this single case, have been induced by some strong deceptions and incitements, to take up arms. The above full account of their remarkable aboriginal progress in the defensive art of war, through which they resisted for two days an artillery siege, and the singular defensive form of their dwelling houses, which as citadels saved the most of their lives in the assault, is given as most interesting. In the heat of the assault, a dragoon was in the act of killing a woman, unrecognized by dress, similar to the man's, and both sexes wearing the hair long; in this extremity she saved her life by an act of the most conclusive personal exposure! Seven years after, the author raised, in half a day, a company of irregulars in this same town, to serve against the Apaches, and efficient fine fellows they were.

The insurrection was general in the northern and

eastern part of the territory. Vegas was saved from revolt by the presence of a garrison; near there, and other northern posts of troops, were rather distant grazing camps; they were attacked with some execution, and the loss of the animals. Some public and sutler trains were robbed of all their oxen and mules. At the handsome village of Mora, eighteen miles west of the present Fort Union, eight Americans were murdered. January 22d, Capt. Hendley, Second Missouri Volunteers, marched there from Vegas the 24th, with eighty men; he found it occupied by above one hundred and fifty men; he engaged with a number, attempting to enter the town, who were supported by a sally; he then assaulted the town; he penetrated from house to house, some of which were destroyed, and into one end of their fort, where he was killed and several were wounded. Lieut. McKarney then—apprehending the return of from three hundred to five hundred men, who had left there that day for Pueblo—withdraw, and marched back to Las Vegas, with fifteen prisoners; he reported fifteen to twenty of the enemy slain.

January 30th, the camp of Capt. Robinson was surprised, and two hundred horses and mules

driven off, and one man killed and two wounded. Major Edmonson marched to his relief from Vegas, and afterward followed the banditti into a dangerous cañon of the Canadian River at the mouth of the Mora; he reported, "the hills around them literally covered with Indians and Mexicans," estimated to be above four hundred. He fought his way through with much difficulty; but having to return the next day through the same cañon, he found "that the enemy had left on the night after the battle in great haste, leaving horses, cattle, camp equipage, etc., not taking time to scalp or strip our men lost in the action, as is their custom." He pursued, but found that they had dispersed after dividing their spoil. The enemy's loss was reported to be forty-one killed.

June 27th, Lieut. R. T. Brown, Second Missouri Volunteers, went with two volunteers and a Mexican guide in pursuit of some horses which had been driven off from Vegas; he found them at Las Vallas, fifteen miles south, and attempting to seize them, the Mexicans resisted, and attacked and killed the whole party. Major Edmonson then marched from Vegas, surprised the town, shot down a few who

attempted to escape, took forty prisoners and sent them to Sante Fè for trial.

On the sixth of July, the grazing camp of Captain Morris's company was attacked; Lieutenant Larkin and four men were killed, and nine wounded, and all the horses and other property fell into the hands of the outlaws. Lieutenant-Colonel Willock marched from Taos in their pursuit, but could not overtake them.

Colonel Price reported July 20th that his command was so reduced by the departure of companies whose time had expired, that he considered it necessary to concentrate all his forces at Santa Fè; that rumors of insurrection were rife, and also of a large force approaching from the South; he adds, "it is certain that the New Mexicans entertain deadly hatred against the Americans."

His call for reinforcements had been anticipated; and by autumn, fresh volunteer regiments from Missouri, engaged for the war, had swelled the force in New Mexico to above three thousand; about double the numbers of those who made the first audacious invasion, and apparent conquest.

And New Mexico then submitted.

III.

THE INFANTRY MARCH TO THE PACIFIC.

THE Mormon battalion was left fifteen miles west of the Rio Grande, in camp near a deep ravine in which was a natural well of rock, which the sagacity of the guides had discovered, to make their first venture in the desert a success. This was November the 13th, 1846.

Next day it entered upon a grassy plain extending indefinitely to the south-west; small isolated mountains rose here and there to view, but a low range barred the better course westward; four miles out, a guide was met, reporting Leroux and the others at a mountain streamlet eight miles off, and more to the north. The camp was made there.

"Thus Leroux, on his second trip—or third, if he attempted the exploration promised by the General,—has only reached about forty miles from the river! I have no guide that knows any thing about the