

astonishment, that they followed the guns to camp in mute wonder.

The next day was through a cañon of the Gila; and there was much obstruction from sand, and dense growth of willow. "Our course was traversed by a seam of yellowish colored igneous rock, shooting up into irregular spires and turrets, one or two thousand feet in height. It ran at right angles to the river, and extended to the north, and to the south, in a chain of mountains as far as the eye could reach. One of these towers was capped with a substance many hundred feet thick, disposed in horizontal strata of different colors, from deep red to bright yellow.

"At night for the first time since leaving Pawnee Fork, I was interrupted for a moment in my observations, by moisture on the glass of my horizontal shade, showing a degree of humidity in the atmosphere not before existing. . . . The effect of the night's dampness was felt in the morning, for, although the thermometer was only thirty-seven degrees, the cold was more sensible than in the dry regions at twenty-five degrees."\*

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

In leaving the mountains, where the grass was a set-off for rugged obstacles, the want of it became a serious danger. On the 9th, they fell upon fresh trails of horses, which they supposed might be those of General Castro, who, Carson had informed them, was to go to Sonora,—of which the settlements were not distant—for recruits, and to return.

#### CASA DE MONTEZUMA.

*November 10th.*—"The valley on the southern side of the Gila still grows wider. About the time of the noon halt, a large pile, which seemed the work of human hands, was seen to the left. It was the remains of a three story mud house, sixty feet square, pierced for doors and windows. The walls four feet thick, and formed by layers of mud two feet thick; it was no doubt built by the same race that had once thickly peopled this territory, and left behind the ruins.

"The charred ends of the cedar joists were still in the wall. I examined them, and found they had not been cut with a steel instrument; the joists were round sticks; there were four entrances—the doors about four feet by two—the rooms had the same ar-

rangement on each story ; there was no sign of a fire-place in the building ; the walls had been smoothed outside and plastered inside, and the surface still remained firm, although it was evident they had been exposed to great heat from the fire. There were the remains of the walls of four buildings, and the piles of earth showing where many others had been. A few yards further was a terrace one hundred yards by seventy, upon this was a pyramid about eight feet high, and twenty-five yards square at top. From this, sitting on my horse, I could overlook the vast plain, on the left bank of the Gila ; the ground in view was about fifteen miles, all of which, it would seem, had been irrigated by the waters of the Gila. I picked up a broken crystal of quartz in one of these piles. Leaving the 'casa,' I turned towards the Pimos, and travelling at random over the plain, now covered with mezquit, the piles of earth and pottery showed for hours in every direction. I also found the remains of a zequia, which followed the range of houses for miles. It had been very large. When I got to camp, I found them on good grass and in communication with the Pimos, who came out with a frank welcome. Their answer to Carson,

when he went up and asked for provisions, was 'bread is to eat, not to sell, take what you want.' The General asked a Pimo who made the house I had seen. 'It is the Casa de Montezuma;' said he, 'It was built by the son of the most beautiful woman, who once dwelt in yon mountain ; she was fair, and all the handsome men came to court her, but in vain ; when they came they paid tribute, and out of this small store she fed all the people in times of famine, and it did not diminish. At last as she lay asleep, a drop of rain fell upon her navel, and she became pregnant, and brought forth a boy who was the builder of all these houses.' He seemed unwilling to talk about them, but said there were many more of them to the north, south-west, etc. ; . . . he said this casa had been burnt too long ago for any of them to remember." \*

I venture an opinion which ardent archæologists may scout, that we need only look to the not very remote ancestry of the tribes now found in Zuñi, Acoma, etc., and the Pueblos of New Mexico,—as Pecos and San Domingo,—for the architects and inhabitants of all these ruins and remains.

\* Journal of Captain A. R. Johnston, First Dragoons, A. D. C.

The General obtained of the Pimos a sufficiency of corn and wheat and beans, but only two or three bullocks, and no mules or horses. They had only steers for tillage, procured from the Mexicans.

"To us it was a rare sight to be thrown in the midst of a large nation of what are termed wild Indians, surpassing many of the Christian nations in agriculture, little behind them in the useful arts, and immeasurably before them in honesty and virtue. During the whole of yesterday, our camp was full of men, women, and children, who sauntered among our packs, unwatched, and not a single instance of theft was reported."\*

The Maricopas, some on foot, but mostly on horseback, came at full speed to their lower camp; unarmed and in the most confident manner, bringing watermelons, meal, pinole and salt,—this last taken from the plains. A pair of spectacles was a cause of much amusement; the women had an idea that the wearer could see through their cotton blankets, but at length a pair being put upon an old woman, she became acquainted with their use, and explained it to the others.

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

November 14th and 15th, the General made the jornada of forty-three miles across the bend of the Gila, losing six or eight mules from exhaustion and want of water. They halted then a day, and found the remains of a zequia and much broken pottery. It was probably the work of the Maricopas, who are known to have moved gradually up from the Gulf.

*November 22d.*—"Most of the men were on foot, and a small party composed chiefly of the General and staff, were a long way ahead of the straggling column, when, as we approached the end of our day's journey, every man was straightened in his saddle by our suddenly falling on a camp, which from the trail, we estimated at one thousand men, who must have left that morning. Speculation was rife, but we all soon settled down upon the opinion that it was General Castro and his troops; that he had succeeded in recruiting an army in Sonora, and was now on his return to California. Carson expressed his belief that he must be only ten miles below, at the crossing. Our force consisted of only one hundred and ten men. The General decided we were too few to be attacked, and must be the aggressive party, and if Castro's camp could be found, that he

would attack it the moment night set in, and beat them before it was light enough to discover our force.

"The position of our camp was decided, as usual, with reference to the grass. The lives of our animals were nearly as important as our own."\*

A party was sent at dark, and it succeeded in capturing four Mexicans. It turned out that the alarm had been caused by a few soldiers and others, and their drove of five hundred horses from California, for the use of Castro in Sonora. The four men, examined separately, told each a different story. One of them, tall and venerable in appearance, reported himself to be the poor employé of a rich man supplying the Sonora market with horses. It was afterwards ascertained that he was a colonel of the Mexican army.

The General remained there next day, attempting to remount his escort from the captured horses. And then a courier with a mail from California fell into his hands; he bore letters to General Castro and other men of note in Sonora, and thus Kearny was informed of the counter revolution in California.

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

"Captain Flores was named as the general and governor *pro tem.*, and the enthusiasm of the people was described as overflowing in the cause of emancipation from the Yankee yoke. One letter gave a minute and detailed account of a victory stated to have been obtained over the Americans. It stated that four hundred and fifty men landed at San Pedro, and were met, defeated, and driven back to the fort at San Pedro. . . . We also learned that the horses captured were in part for General Castro. Nothing more was wanting to legitimize our capture, and Captain Moore was directed to remount his men."\*

The Mexicans were very dexterous in evading inquiries; one of them, an acquaintance of Carson, was well plied with brandy; but the most that could be extorted from him, was the advice not to march directly upon Los Angeles.

"The captured horses were all wild and but little adapted for immediate service; but there was rare sport in catching them, and we saw for the first time the lazo thrown with inimitable skill. It is a saying in Chihuahua that a 'Californian can throw

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

the lazo as well with his foot as the Mexican can with his hand,' and the scene before us gave us an idea of its truth. There was a wild stallion of great beauty which defied the fleetest horse and the most expert rider. At length a boy of fourteen, a Californian, whose graceful riding was a constant subject of admiration, piqued by repeated failures, mounted a fresh horse, and followed by an Indian, launched fiercely at the stallion.

His lariat darted from his hand with the force and precision of a rifle ball, and rested on the neck of the fugitive; the Indian, at the same moment, made a successful throw, but the stallion was too stout for both, and dashed off at full speed, with both ropes flying in the air like wings. The perfect representation of Pegasus, he took a sweep, and followed by his pursuers, came thundering down the dry bed of the river. The lazos were now trailing on the ground, and the gallant young Spaniard, taking advantage of the circumstance, stooped from his flying horse and caught one in his hand. It was the work of a moment to make it fast to the pommel of his saddle, and by a short turn of his own horse, he

threw the stallion a complete somersault, and the game was secure."\*

November 25th, the river was forded at the same place, ten miles below the Gila's mouth, that the Mormon battalion passed forty-six days later, some of the horses swimming when its crooked course was lost; they camped fifteen miles below, at the first well, where only the men got water. Next day they reached the Alamo Mocho well, twenty-four miles, at 4 P. M.; they had much work to deepen the well before water was reached; an old champagne basket, first, and then a basket work of willow twigs, was used to prevent caving sand. The evening and night were spent in watering the animals, which had made two marches without drinking.

The following morning they marched very early, and in forty miles reached at 8 o'clock P. M. a salt lake, of which contradictory accounts had been received; it was found surrounded by a thick quagmire, and the water wholly unfit for any use. After a few hours' rest, the animals browsing at a few mezquit trees, they marched on in the dark, but

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

were favored after sunrise, by a heavy fog for two hours, which proved refreshing; but "the stoutest animals now began to stagger, and when day dawned scarcely a man was seen mounted." At noon the Cariza was reached.

November 29, the grass being bad, and rations nearly exhausted, the march was continued at a "snail's pace," and that night a horse was killed for food, which was eaten with great appetite, and all of it consumed. They were compelled to remain in camp next day.

December 2d, the General arrived at Warner's rancho, and learned "that the Mexicans were still in the possession of the whole country except San Diego, San Francisco, and Monterey; that we were near the heart of the enemy's stronghold, whence he drew his supplies of men, cattle, and horses, and that we were now in possession of the great pass to Sonora, by which he expected to retreat if defeated, to send his prisoners if successful, and to communicate with Mexico.

"To appease hunger, however, was the first consideration. Seven of my men ate at one single meal, a fat full grown sheep."

A Mr. Stokes, who lived fifteen miles on the road to San Diego, was sent for and came; "his dress was a black velvet English hunting coat, a pair of black velvet trowsers, cut off at the knees and open on the outside to the hip, beneath which were drawers of spotless white; his leggings were of black buckskin, and his heels armed with spurs six inches long. Above the whole bloomed the merry face of Mr Stokes, the Englishman. He was very frank, proclaimed himself a neutral, but gave all the information he possessed, which was, that Commodore Stockton was in possession of San Diego, and that all the country between that place and Santa Barbara was in possession of the 'country people;' he stated he was going to San Diego the next morning. The General gave him a letter for that place."\*

Information was received that there was a band of horses and mules fifteen miles on the road to Los Angeles, belonging to General Flores. Lieutenant Davidson and fifteen men, accompanied by Carson, were sent at nightfall to capture them. The party returned successful next day, December 3d, at noon;

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

but the animals were found to be mostly unbroken, and so, little serviceable.

*December 4th.*—The General marched in a rain which lasted all day; he camped at Mr. Stokes' place, in the valley of the San Isabel River, which was formerly a mission.

Next day they marched to the rancheria of Santa Maria; where it was learned that the enemy was in force, nine miles distant; it was after dark, but there being no grass, they went two miles further and camped in a cañon. On the way they met Captain Gillespie, Lieutenant Beale, and Midshipman Duncan of the navy, with a party of thirty-five men, sent from San Diego with a dispatch for General Kearny.

The following is from the General's official report:—

"Having learned from Captain Gillespie, of the volunteers, that there was an armed party of Californians at San Pascual, three leagues distant, . . . I sent Lieutenant Hammond, First Dragoons, with a few men to make a reconnoissance of them. He returned at two in the morning of the 6th instant, reporting that he had found the party in the place mentioned, and that he had been seen, though not pursued by them. I then determined that I would march for, and attack them by break of day; arrangements were accordingly made for the purpose. My aid-de-camp, Captain Johnston, First Dragoons, was as-

signed to the command of the advanced guard of twelve dragoons mounted on the best horses we had; then followed about fifty dragoons under Captain Moore, mounted, but, with few exceptions, on the tired mules they had ridden from Santa Fe, ten hundred and fifty miles; then about twenty volunteers of Captain Gibson's company under his command and that of Captain Gillespie; then followed our two mountain howitzers with dragoons to manage them, and under the command of Lieutenant Davidson of the regiment. . . . As the day, December 6th, dawned, we approached the enemy at San Pascual, who was already in the saddle, when Captain Johnston made a furious charge upon them with his advanced guard, and was in a short time after supported by the dragoons, soon after which the enemy gave way, having kept up from the beginning a continual fire upon us. Upon the retreat of the enemy, Captain Moore led off rapidly in pursuit, accompanied by the dragoons mounted on horses, and was followed, though slowly, by the others on their tired mules. The enemy, well mounted and among the best horsemen in the world, after retreating about half a mile, and seeing an interval between Captain Moore with his advance and the dragoons coming to his support, rallied their whole force, charged with their lances, and on account of their greatly-superior numbers, but few of us in front remained untouched;\* for five minutes they held the ground from us, when our men coming up, we again drove them, and they fled from the field not to return to it, which we occupied and encamped upon. A most melancholy duty now remains for me; it is to report the death of my aid-de-camp, Captain Johnston, who was shot dead at the commencement of the action; of Captain Moore, who was lanced just previous to the final retreat of the enemy; and of Lieutenant Hammond, also lanced, who survived but a few hours. We also had killed, two sergeants, two corporals, and ten privates of the first dragoons; one private of the volunteers, and one engaged in the topographical department.

\* Their number was thirty-eight; *all* of whom save two, were killed or wounded.

Among the wounded are myself, (in two places) Lieutenant Warner, topographical engineers, (in three places,) Captain Gillespie and Captain Gibson, of the volunteers, (the former in three places,) one sergeant, bugler and nine privates of the dragoons; many of them receiving from two to ten lance wounds, most of them when unhorsed and incapable of resistance. Our howitzers were not brought into the action, but coming to the front at the close of it, before they were turned so as to admit of being fired upon the retreating enemy, the two mules before one of them got alarmed and freeing themselves from their drivers ran off among the enemy and were thus lost to us. The enemy proved to be a party of about one hundred and sixty Californians, under Andreas Pico, brother of the late governor."

Thanks are returned for their gallantry, particularly to Captain Turner, first dragoons, A. A. A. G., and to Lieutenant Emory. The General's wounds were so serious, that during the day Captain Turner was in command; the ground was so rough with rocks and cacti, that it was difficult to find a smooth place even for the wounded. The dead were buried that night, as secretly as possible, for fear of the disturbance and robbery of the bodies, "with no other accompaniment than the howlings of myriads of wolves."

Early in the day messengers had been sent, by a circuitous route, to San Diego, thirty-nine miles distant, for wheel carriages for the use of the wounded.

"Our provisions were exhausted, our horses dead,

our mules on their last legs, and our men, now reduced to one-third of their number, were ragged, worn down by fatigue, and emaciated."\*

The General's report continues:—

"On the morning of the 7th, having made ambulancse for our wounded . . . we proceeded on our march, when the enemy showed himself, occupying the hills in our front, which they left as we approached, till reaching San Bernardo a party of them took possession of a hill near to it and maintained their position until attacked by our advance, who quickly drove them from it, killing and wounding five of their number with no loss on our part."

The captured hill was kept possession of; the cattle had been lost in this attack.

December 8th, water was bored for, and the fattest of the mules was killed for meat. That day, under a flag of truce, one of the messengers to San Diego captured on his return, was exchanged. It was understood that these messengers brought back a written refusal of aid; certainly no aid came; the exchanged man stated he had hid a dispatch at a certain tree pointed out; but the dispatch could not, afterward, be found. It was twenty-nine miles to San Diego. It was impossible to remove the wounded until they could ride, in the presence of such superior numbers, and that night Lieutenant Beale, of the

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

Navy,\* Carson, and an Indian, volunteered and went to San Diego; it was a dangerous undertaking, as the enemy occupied all the roads. That day "the brave Sergeant Cox," who had died of his wounds, was buried.

Two more days passed without aid for this crippled, encumbered band,—surrounded by an increasing horde of enemies. December 10th, "The enemy attacked our camp, driving before them a band of wild horses, with which they hoped to produce a stampede. Our men behaved with admirable coolness, turning off the wild animals dexterously. Two or three of the fattest were killed in the charge, and formed, in the shape of a gravy-soup, an agreeable substitute for the poor steaks of our worn down brutes, on which we had been feeding for a number of days.†

\*Since Minister to Austria.

† "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance." The following is also extracted,—occurring the night of the 8th: "Don Antonio Robideaux, a thin man of fifty-five years, slept next to me. The loss of blood from his wounds, added to the coldness of the night, twenty-eight degrees Fahrenheit, made me think he would never see daylight, but I was mistaken. He woke me to ask if I did not smell coffee, and expressed the belief that a cup of that beverage would save his life, and that nothing else would. Not knowing that there had been any coffee in camp for many days, I supposed a dream had carried him back to the cafés of St Louis and New Orleans, and it was with some surprise that I found my cook heating a cup of coffee

The same day the surgeon, Griffin, reported that all the wounded but two, would be able to ride.

There was so little expectation of Lieutenant Beale's success that the General ordered every incumbrance including great-coats, to be burned; and all preparation to be made for the march next morning.

"We were all reposing quietly, but not sleeping, waiting for the break of day, when we were to go down and give the enemy another defeat. . . . The tramp of a column was heard, followed by the hail of a sentinel.

"It was a detachment of one hundred tars and eighty marines under Lieutenant Gray, sent to meet us by Commodore Stockton, from whom we learned that Lieutenant Beale, Carson and the Indian

over a small fire made of wild sage. One of the most agreeable little offices performed in my life, and I believe in the cook's, to whom the coffee belonged, was to pour the precious draught into the waning body of our friend Robideaux. His warmth returned, and with it hopes of life. In gratitude he gave me the half of a cake made of brown flour, almost black with dirt, and which had, for greater security, been hidden in the clothes of his Mexican servant, a man who scorned ablutions. I ate more than half without inspection, when, on breaking a piece, the bodies of several of the most loathsome insects were exposed to my view. My hunger, however, overcame my fastidiousness, and the morceau did not appear particularly disgusting."

had arrived safely in San Diego. The detachment left San Diego on the night of the 9th, cached themselves during the day of the 10th, and joined us on the night of that day. These gallant fellows busied themselves till day distributing their provisions and clothes to our naked and hungry people." \*

This junction was a surprise to the Californians, and when the sun rose on the 11th, only a squad of them was to be seen; and in retiring they had left most of the cattle behind, although none of General Kearny's force were now mounted. It was ascertained that one hundred and eighty Californians were engaged at San Pascual, and that one hundred additional joined them next day from the Pueblo of Los Angeles.

December 12th, General Kearny reached San Diego.

The frigate Congress and sloop Portsmouth were at the anchorage opposite the hide ware-houses two miles from the village; this consisted of a few adobe houses, only two or three, of all, with plank floors.

\* "Notes of a Military Reconnoissance."

## V.

### FINAL CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA.

THUS General Kearny had found that the Californians, having thought better of their first apparent submission—which was the result of surprise, and their habitual acquiescence in pronunciamientos and revolutions—had thrown off, by force of arms, near three months previously, the foreign yoke; that of the whole great Territory, only three small villages on the coast were dominated by the navy, which had ceased all further efforts, apparently vain enough. He had fought the first battle of the real conquest.

Now his first thoughts were not of title, of rank, and right of command in the Territory, but patriotic and unselfish. His lance wounds soon healing, he suggested and then patiently continued to urge on Commodore Stockton that action must be taken; that the naval force which could be spared to act on land, his few dragoons and some volun-