

swift current (which forced Beale to encamp for the night) raises heavy seas. In these it is believed the boat was swamped, and all on board were lost.

It happened that, although we had worked cordially together, I had never met Commander Montgomery, but the generous promptness with which his mind rose to the spirit of the occasion, and the willing activity with which he had entered into my plans in the Sacramento valley, had given me a feeling of comradeship with him that made his loss almost personal to me. The aid which he gave had encouraged the settlers, added strength to my movements, and embarrassed the Mexican authorities. He was a man of quick and generous impulses, and with that kind of loyal patriotism which sets country above self and does not stop to calculate the cost when the occasion offers to serve it. He did not fail to comprehend that there was purpose in my movements, and, from his interview with Gillespie, he learned enough to satisfy himself that I had authority for what I was doing. From that moment I had his willing aid and cordial sympathy. He could not go beyond a certain limit, but he chafed with the restraint of his position, and was eager for open action. The year for which the name of a "missing" officer is still carried on the rolls was about to expire, and brought the official inquiry which is answered in the following official reports to the Navy Department. They show that all search had been in vain, and that no trace of the missing boat could be found. Such an accident, surrounded by land and so near, seemed harder than if it had occurred on the open sea.

(No. 43.—Copy.)

U. S. SHIP INDEPENDENCE, MONTEREY, September 30, 1847.

SIR: I enclose a report, from Commander J. B. Hull, of all that is known in relation to the loss of the launch of the *Warren* and Midshipmen Montgomery and Haganin.

The boat is supposed to have foundered in the Straits of Carquinez, through which the ebb-tide sets with great velocity against a strong wind and caused, of course, a dangerous sea.

The shores in the neighborhood and wherever it was supposed the wreck might have drifted, have been carefully and frequently examined, but nothing that was in the boat has been found, and I regret to say that there is not a shadow of doubt that all on board perished.

I am respectfully your obedient servant,

W. BRANFORD SHUBRICK,

Commanding Pacific Squadron.

Hon. John Y. Mason,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

(Copy.)

U. S. SHIP WARREN, MONTEREY BAY, September 30, 1847.

SIR: In reply to your letter of this date, directing me to make to you a detailed report of the loss of the launch in which Midshipman Montgomery perished, I have the honor to submit the following statement of that melancholy occurrence. On the 13th of November last, the launch of this ship left San Francisco to go up the Sacramento to Sutter's Fort, on public service, under the order of Commander Montgomery, then in command of the Northern Depart-

ment of California. She was in charge of Acting Master William H. Montgomery, and had on board a brother of W. Montgomery and Midshipman D. C. Haganin, of the *Portsmouth*, and the following men belonging to the ship, viz.: Geo. Redmore, C. A. G.; Milton Ladd, seaman; Anthony Sylvester, seaman; John Dowd, seaman; Alexr. McDonald, O. S.; Philip L. Lee, seaman; Saml. Lane, O. S.; Gilman Hilton, O. S.; Saml. Turner, landsman. And a quantity of arms and ammunition sufficient for her defence. There was also on board the sum of about nine hundred dollars sent to pay bills due at the fort on account of the service.

After she had been absent longer than was thought necessary to perform the trip, great anxiety was felt for her safety, and on the 30th of the month a hired boat with some men from this ship was sent, by my direction, in search of her: on the 18th of December the boat returned, after having searched the river and inlets as far as Fort Sacramento, without hearing anything of the missing launch. A day or two after the launch left the ship there was a violent gale, in which it was afterwards thought she must have been lost, and no definite intelligence has since been heard of her.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. B. HULL,

Commander.

Commodore W. B. Shubrick,

Commanding U. S. Squadron, Pacific Ocean.

The next morning I reported to the commodore my arrival with one hundred and seventy good men, well armed and with their horse equipments ready for service when horses could be had to mount them. The day following we were embarked on the ship *Stirling*, under orders to proceed to Santa Barbara and endeavor to surprise the enemy at that place. The commodore meanwhile had ordered Captain Mervine, then lying at Monterey in the frigate *Savannah* under sailing orders for the coast of Mexico, to go direct to San Pedro and give all possible support to the little garrison at Los Angeles.

The *Stirling* got underway at the same time with the *Congress*, but the commodore having crossed the bar and got to sea before us, hove to until we were also fairly at sea, and both vessels headed their way with a fair wind down the coast. In the afternoon of the day of sailing we separated, in a fog, from the *Congress*.

The events which were involved in the movements of the commodore influenced the course of my own life, and for this reason I will leave the *Stirling* out of sight in the fog and follow him. Between San Francisco and Monterey the commodore spoke the merchant ship *Barnstable*, with despatches to himself from Captain Maddox at Monterey, informing him that an attack on the town was expected and asking immediate aid. Running the *Congress* into the bay of Monterey, he reinforced the garrison with two officers and fifty men and some artillery; and continuing down the coast, he touched at Santa Barbara to ascertain if I, with my sailing vessel, had succeeded in "surprising" that town. Not finding me there, he continued on to San Pedro, where he found the *Savannah*.

Upon his capitulation at Los Angeles, Captain Gillespie had retreated with his garrison to San Pedro and the merchant ship *Vandalia*, then lying



there. Shortly after, Captain Mervine entered with the frigate *Savannah*, under orders from Commodore Stockton, to afford all the aid within the compass of the *Savannah's* resources to the little garrison at Los Angeles. Acting in the spirit of his instructions, Mervine landed part of his crew of sailors and marines with Gillespie's men, but without artillery, and attempted to force his way across the plain to Los Angeles. Early on the march he was met by a body of Californians with a single piece of artillery, which they used so effectually to harass him that he was compelled to abandon his attempt to reach the town and retreat to his ship, with a loss of four killed and several wounded. Wherever horses could be brought into play the Californians were at home, and being naturally brave, could be used to the utmost advantage that man and horse, acting together, were capable of. Men growing up on foot will be equally brave but not equally bold as men growing up on horseback. Here in California we had the spectacle of ranchmen, without discipline and fresh from their ranchos, attacking and defeating a regular force having the prestige which regular forces always have in their favor against irregular troops. In this skirmish their simple tactics were to run down upon Mervine's troops within fair range of their single gun and open fire upon them; continuing it until the Americans got near enough to make their fire in turn effectual, when the vaqueros would lasso their gun and gallop off with it at full speed to another convenient distance; keeping up this manœuvre until Captain Mervine found that he could not reach Los Angeles without great loss, if in fact he should find himself able to reach it before being surrounded and cut off by the accumulating force of the Californian cavalry, which in the meantime was suffering no loss. Mervine repeatedly attempted to charge the Californians, his men bravely seconding him and making every effort to reach them, but it was literally impossible; he being on foot and they being on horseback.

The commodore was displeased with this incident and with its natural result in the encouragement it would give to the Californians, and proceeded at once to remove this impression. "Elated by this transient success which the enemy, with his usual want of veracity, magnified into a great victory, they collected in large bodies on all the adjacent hills, and would not permit a hoof except their own horses to be within fifty miles of San Pedro." I have a reason for letting Commodore Stockton speak here-along for himself.

In the instructions given to me I had been informed that he would land here to co-operate with me on my approach from Santa Barbara. Orders were accordingly given to prepare for the landing of the troops in the morning, and a party of volunteers were ordered to land before daylight, "to cover the general landing which was to be made up a very steep bank and in the face of the enemy. The volunteers failing to land in time, in

consequence of a fancied force of the enemy; not so with the sailors and marines, who were ready in the boats alongside the two ships, and who, as soon as I discovered that the volunteers had not succeeded, I ordered to land. The boats of the *Savannah* were under the immediate command of Captain Mervine; those of the *Congress* under the immediate command of Lieutenant Commander Livingston, and performed the service in a most gallant manner, being myself present."

"On our approach to the shore, the enemy fired a few muskets without harm and fled; we took possession and once more hoisted our flag at San Pedro."

The commander-in-chief commended "the determined courage with which the officers, sailors, and marines landed (in despite of the false alarm as to the enemy's force), and again hoisted the American standard at San Pedro."

"The troops remained encamped at that place for several days before the insurgents, who covered the adjacent hills, and until both officers and men had become almost worn out by chasing and skirmishing with and watching them, and until I had given up all hope of the co-operation of Major Frémont. Besides, the enemy had driven off every animal, man and beast, from that section of the country, and it was not possible, by any means in our power, to carry provisions for our march to the city."

"I resolved, therefore, to embark the troops, and waste no more time there, but to go down south and, if possible, to get animals somewhere along the coast before the enemy could know or prevent it, and to mount my own men and march to the city by the southern route."

Sometimes, however, infantry has been known to carry rations enough for support during a march of thirty miles. Tired of waiting on me, the commodore left the *Savannah* to look out for me, and sailed to San Diego, where Lieutenant Minor was in command. Arriving off the harbor he attempted to cross the bar, but the ship got ashore, and he was obliged to return to the outside anchorage.

Lieutenant Minor reporting the town besieged by the Californians and that more men and provisions were required for the garrison, Captain Gillespie was sent on shore with supplies and that part of my battalion which had formed the garrison at Los Angeles.

At Lieutenant Minor's request Captain Gibson of the battalion was sent with a party to a locality of ranchos near the coast, to the southward, indicated by Señor Bandini, where some horses and cattle might be obtained.

Two days after his arrival at San Diego, the *Malek Adhel* came in from Monterey with despatches from me, in which I wrote to Commodore Stockton: "We met the *Vandalia* with information of the occurrences below.



Mr. Howard represented that the enemy had driven off all the horses and cattle, so that it would be impossible to obtain either for transportation or supplies. Under the circumstances, and using the discretionary authority you have given me, I judged it of paramount necessity to haul up immediately for this port, with the intention to send for all the men who could be raised in the north, and for the band of horses which I had left on the *Consumné*. In the meantime we should be able to check the insurrection here, and procure horses and supplies, so as to be in readiness to march to the southward immediately on the arrival of our reinforcements." I have sometimes wondered, since reading the commodore's letters to the Secretary of the Navy, in which he kept him informed of my failure to connect, if it never occurred to Stockton that the same difficulties which blocked his march upon Los Angeles were also in the way of my command, which was expected to operate as a mounted force in the interior.

Upon the receipt of my letter the commodore went back with his ship to San Pedro and sent the *Savannah* to Monterey to aid me in preparing for the march on Los Angeles. Returning to San Diego he buoyed the bar and succeeded in getting the *Congress* into the harbor, where she could lie undisturbed by the southeast storms. Meantime Gibson had succeeded in bringing into San Diego some horses and cattle, but the horses were in such poor condition that it would require weeks of rest to fit them for service. On the afternoon of the commodore's arrival the Californians made an attack on the town, but were driven back with the loss of two men killed and four wounded. Such skirmishes were of almost daily occurrence, resulting mostly from the attempts of the garrison to reach the ranchos for supplies.

During the time that he remained at San Diego the unreflecting impatience which belonged to the temperament of Commodore Stockton experienced some useful schooling. Inside the bulwarks of a ship of war patience in the commander was an unknown quantity. He could hold coast towns under the fire of his guns; but when it came to equipping a force on the coast of an enemy's country for a march into the interior he saw with surprise that such things as obstacles to his will could exist. Finding that his alert enemy had driven every animal off from the coast in the neighborhood of San Diego, and refused to let him have any horses or cattle or fresh provisions of any kind, he bethought himself of the sea which he knew about, and decided to deceive the Californians by sending a vessel down the coast several hundred miles away to a part of Lower California, where the tidings of war had probably not yet reached the scattered ranchos, or where, if they had, one of the usual trading vessels would arouse no suspicion. Accordingly about the end of November Captain Hensley, with Company B of the battalion, was embarked in the merchant



"MIDSHIPMAN BEALE."



ship *Stonington*, directed to go down the coast of California to try there for horses and mules, saddles and saddle gearing, cattle and working bullocks for the guns; all of which were essential for the march on Los Angeles. The saddle tree and horse-hair girth and saddle gear generally of the Californians are made for hard service, and very strong, especially the tree and girth; and usually were made on the ranchos. While efforts were made to procure these from the outside, the men inside the town were kept at work to contribute to the necessary equipment.

About this time two men came into San Diego from the enemy's camp at San Bernardo, reporting it to consist of only about fifty men. Thereupon Captain Gillespie was ordered, with as many men as horses could be found to mount, and one field-piece, to make an attempt to "surprise" them. During his day of preparation for this service an English resident of California, Mr. Stokes, came into San Diego, bearing the following letter to Commodore Stockton from Brigadier-General Kearny, of the United States Army, who had just reached by overland journey the frontier of inhabited California:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE WEST,  
CAMP AT WARNER'S, December 2, 1846.

SIR: I (this afternoon) reached here, escorted by a party of the First Regiment Dragoons. I came by orders from the President of the United States. We left Santa Fé on the 25th of September, having taken possession of New Mexico, annexed it to the United States, established a civil government in that territory, and secured order, peace, and quietness there.

If you can send a party to open a communication with us, on the route to this place, I wish you would do so, and as quickly as possible.

The fear of this letter falling into Mexican hands prevents me from writing more.

Your express by Mr. Carson was met on the Del Norte, and your mail must have reached Washington at least ten days since.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
S. W. KEARNY,  
*Brigadier-General, U. S. A.*

It will be remarked that in this letter no mention is made of Carson, other than the reference to him as bearer of an "express."

A good pass called by the name of Warner led directly from the desert through the lower mountain onto Warner's rancho. Stockton replied as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, SAN DIEGO,  
December 3, 1846, half-past 6 o'clock P.M.

SIR: I have this moment received your note of yesterday, by Mr. Stokes, and have ordered Captain Gillespie, with a detachment of mounted riflemen and a field-piece, to your camp without delay.

Captain Gillespie is well informed in relation to the present state of things in California, and will give you all needful information. I need not, therefore, detain him by saying anything on



the subject. I will merely say that I have this evening received information, by two deserters from the rebel camp, of the arrival of an additional force in this neighborhood of one hundred men, which in addition to the force previously here, makes their number about one hundred and fifty.

I send with Captain Gillespie, as a guide, one of the deserters, that you may make inquiries of him, and, if you see fit, endeavor to surprise them.

Faithfully, your obedient servant,

R. F. STOCKTON,

*Commander-in-Chief and Governor of the Territory of California.*

By Kearny's letter it appeared that he had not only taken possession of New Mexico, but had "annexed" it to the United States. Giving my story here along as briefly as I can, to do so clearly, I still thought it well to insert some letters in order to give at their source statements of facts or events, which have special bearing on my narrative, and I have not given much space to minor occurrences of the time, but occupied myself with the men who were chief actors in the more important events, and who made them. And in order to isolate them from their surroundings and give them the greater prominence, I have let them tell their own story, and disclose their thoughts in their letters; so, giving a truer idea of their characters than I should have done if I had transfused their thoughts through my own mind and language. Gillespie's command being immediately available, he was ordered to proceed forthwith to General Kearny's camp. His party consisted of twenty-six men from the battalion under Captain Gibson; with a detachment of ten carbineers and a brass four-pounder field-piece from the *Congress*, under Acting-Lieutenant Beale and Midshipman Duncan.

Among the men from the battalion was Godey, who had been made by Stockton a first lieutenant. His knowledge of the country and experience in it made him at this juncture a valuable man. Captain Gillespie left San Diego with his command about seven o'clock in the evening of the 3d, in all but forty men, every horse fit for service having been taken for the use of the party. With every effort made, the few animals brought in by Captain Gibson were all that could be gleaned from the country. Mr. Stokes accompanied the party, and with it went also one of the Californians who had come in from their camp at San Bernardo. He was sent to guide General Kearny in the event that he should wish to attack it.

On the day but one following his departure from San Diego, Gillespie met General Kearny about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the mountains between Santa Maria and Santa Ysabel, and put himself at his orders. Small as it was, his party proved a seasonable addition to the force which the general had with him. Informed by Gillespie of the proximity of the small force of the Californians, the general decided to attack, and, if possible, to "surprise" them. In the evening of the same day he encamped near San Pasqual.

A few days after Gillespie had left San Diego Mr. Stokes returned, bringing information that General Kearny had attempted to "surprise" the Californians at San Bernardo, and that sharp fighting had followed the attack, in which the general had lost many killed and wounded, and one of his guns; and had been worsted. What was the final result he did not know, as he had left before the action was over, without communicating with any one on the field of battle. It suggests itself naturally here that Gillespie would have fared badly had he, as was intended, attempted the same performance with his forty men. Mr. Stokes, in his excitement, had seen a great many men on the field, and he reported General Kearny's force as three hundred and fifty.

The day after the arrival of Stokes, Lieutenant Godey, on the 7th, with two men, came in, having been hurried forward from San Pasqual with the following letter:

HEADQUARTERS, CAMP NEAR SAN PASQUAL, December 6, 1846.

SIR: I have the honor to report to you that at early dawn this morning General Kearny, with a detachment of the United States dragoons and Captain Gillespie's company of mounted riflemen, had an engagement with a very considerable Mexican force near this camp.

We have about eighteen killed and fourteen or fifteen wounded; several so severely that it may be impracticable to move them for several days. I have to suggest to you the propriety of despatching, without delay, a considerable force to meet us on the route to San Diego, via the Soledad and San Bernardo, or to find us at this place; also, that you will send up carts or some other means of transporting our wounded to San Diego. We are without provisions, and in our present situation find it impracticable to obtain cattle from the ranches in the vicinity.

General Kearny is among the wounded, but it is hoped not dangerously; Captains Monroe and Johnson, First Dragoons, killed; Lieutenant Hammond, First Dragoons, dangerously wounded.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. S. TURNER,

*Captain U. S. A., comdg.*

*Commodore R. F. Stockton, U. S. Navy, San Diego.*

Godey was unable to give any certain account of the force engaged on either side, and the result of the action, together with Stokes' report, induced Stockton to believe that the Californian strength was much greater than he had been led to suppose. He therefore prepared to set out himself to Kearny's relief with his whole force.

Preparations were at once made for his advance, with two pieces of artillery, to move forward at seven o'clock of the same evening to the Mission of San Diego, about nine miles from the town; the commodore intending to join it with the remainder of his force the next day.

Meantime, great was his surprise to learn from Godey that Carson was in General Kearny's camp, and he lost himself in conjectures as to how he came there.

Preparations for the intended march were being pushed at all points