

	PAGE
General Taylor's Election.....	40
His Departure for Washington.....	402
His Withdrawal from the Army.....	408
Demonstrations of Popular Favor.....	404

CHAPTER XI.

His Inauguration.....	406
Inaugural Address.....	407
Takes the Oath of Office.....	410
Removal of Office-Holders.....	411
The Slavery Question.....	412
His First Message to Congress.....	414
Its Merits.....	415
Message on California and New Mexico.....	418—419
His Policy as Executive.....	424
Exposure on the Fourth of July.....	425
Attacked by Cholera Morbus.....	426
Progress of the Disease.....	427
Declared past Recovery.....	428
Dying Declaration.....	429
His Devotion to a sense of Duty.....	430—431
Death-bed Scene.....	432
Meeting of the Cabinet.....	433
Universal Grief at the President's Death.....	434—435
Fillmore's Message.....	436
Mr. Webster's Speech.....	437
Fillmore's Second Message.....	440
Addresses in Congress.....	441
Mr. Baker's Speech.....	443
Preparations made for the Funeral.....	444—445
Military Companies in the Procession.....	446—447
The Procession.....	448
Funeral Services.....	449
Dr. Pyne's Address.....	450
The Funeral Car.....	457
Old Whitey.....	458
Lines on his Death.....	459
Universal Attachment.....	460
His last Letter.....	461
His Character.....	462

L I F E

OF

GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR

ZACHARY

CHAPTER I.

The Taylor Family—Colonel Richard Taylor—Birth of Zachary Taylor—His youth—Early indications of Character—Education—Disadvantages he labored under—His Bold and Adventurous Disposition—Hazardous Exploit—Love of Military Display—Receives a Lieutenant's Commission in the Regular Army—Promoted to the rank of Captain—His Gallant Defence of Fort Harrison—The Account of the Engagement—Receives the Brevet of Major—Expedition against the Indians—Services in the Black Hawk War—Promoted successively to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel—Appointed Indian Agent.

ZACHARY TAYLOR is descended from an ancient and distinguished English family, which emigrated to America and settled in the eastern part of the colony of Virginia, in the year 1692, and the name has been intimately identified and interwoven with the civil, political, and military history of Virginia, both as a weak and languishing colony, and a great and powerful commonwealth, from that day to the present. Amongst others with whom General Zachary Taylor is connected, either by the ties of consanguinity or marriage,

and whose names have rendered its history illustrious are numbered the Madisons, Lees, Barbours, Pendletons, Conways, Talafieros, Hunts, Gaineses, &c.

The father of Zachary Taylor held a colonel's commission throughout the Revolution, and served with great valor during that long and unequal struggle, much of the time with Washington himself, and retaining in all emergencies, and under every difficulty, his confidence and esteem. He was engaged in many of the most fiercely contested and bloody battles of the war, and particularly at Trenton, where he rendered distinguished and valuable aid to the commander-in-chief, in that brilliant achievement.

In 1790 Colonel Taylor emigrated to company with Colonels Croghan and Bullitt, when that territory was but little more than an Indian hunting ground. It was then the scene of frequent fierce and bloody strifes between the various tribes which inhabited it, and murderous excursions against the emigrant population who had settled there. From these desperate and bloody encounters, amongst themselves and with the white man, Kentucky derived the name of the "Dark and Bloody Ground."

In many of these encounters Colonel Taylor bore a conspicuous part, and by his bold and daring conduct, and ceaseless vigilance, rendered his name a terror to the merciless foe. After peace was established, he held many honorable and responsible positions. He was one of the framers of the constitution of Kentucky; represented Jefferson county, and Louisville city for many years in both branches of the state legislature, and was a member of the electoral colleges which voted for Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Clay. Among the politicians of Kentucky, he is remembered

as one of the few men of the Old Court party, who could be elected during the excitement of the "Old Court and New Court question."

Colonel Taylor died on his plantation near Louisville, Kentucky, leaving three sons, (his second and fourth sons, George and William, having died previously,) Hancock, Zachary and Joseph, and three daughters, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Emily.

Hancock, Elizabeth, and Emily, have died since their father, so that Joseph and Sarah are the only brother and sister of Zachary now living. The descendants of the deceased members of the family, with two exceptions, live in and near Louisville, Kentucky.

ZACHARY TAYLOR was born in Orange county, Virginia, in 1784, and was less than a year old when his father emigrated to Kentucky. His youth was therefore spent, and his character formed, amidst the dangers and difficulties of Indian warfare, and the hardships and privations ever incident to a frontier life. His boyhood was distinguished by indications of that straightforward, manly independence of character, inflexibility of purpose, frank and open disposition, foresight, decision and energy; modest and retiring demeanor, and thoughtful, inquiring mind, that have since borne him so triumphantly through difficulties and dangers before which men educated in a less severe school would have shrunk in despair, until he has wrought out a name that will fill one of the brightest pages in American history.

Many family and neighborhood anecdotes are told to illustrate his daring and adventurous character, and his love for dangerous enterprises. Night after night he was in the habit of seeing the house barricaded, and the arms prepared to repel any attack that might be

made before the morning dawned. Scarcely a week passed that there was not an alarm, or an actual incursion of Indians amongst the settlements. ~~Even~~ on his way to school he was in danger of the tomahawk and scalping knife. On one occasion, some of his schoolmates were murdered and scalped by the Indians, within a hundred yards from the point where he and his brothers had separated from them.

When but seventeen years old he swam across the Ohio river, from the Kentucky to the Indiana shore, in the month of March, when the river was filled with floating ice, which is a feat far surpassing in danger and difficulty the far-famed exploit of swimming the Hellespont. Many other well-attested anecdotes are related of his daring adventures, and his love of bold and dangerous exploits. He took great delight in fishing and hunting, and was often absent, roaming through forests and over boundless prairies, for days and nights together, in quest of game. No obstacle would dampen his indomitable energy, or discourage him from attempting the most hazardous enterprises.

As may well be understood, young Taylor enjoyed but few advantages for acquiring a practical, much less an ornamental or classical education. The character of the schools of Kentucky, at that time, as in all other new and sparsely settled districts, were not of a very elevated character. The few schools then, were supported by private munificence, and were not of a character to lay a very broad or deep foundation for those attainments, and that useful superstructure of knowledge, which the superior facilities of the present day render so easy of access. But few as were the advantages afforded him, his ever active and inquiring mind, his great love of learning, his remarkably strong

and retentive memory, and above all, his iron will and great tenacity of purpose, more than compensated, in his case, for what otherwise would have confined his acquirements to the commonest rudiments of an English education. But by the aid of these striking characteristics, he was enabled to overcome all difficulties, and to store his mind with a fund of information that few have acquired, even under the most favorable circumstances. The elegance, beauty and simplicity of his official dispatches from Mexico, stamp him as one of the chastest and most accomplished writers of the day.

Amongst Taylor's most intimate associates at school, were Col. Joseph P. Taylor, who afterwards distinguished himself at the battle of Okee-cho-bee, during the Florida war, and has now the control of the commissary department in Mexico, and Col. George Croghan, subsequently the hero of Fort Sandusky, and at present holding a high post in the army of the United States. He remained with his family, in Kentucky, until the year 1808, when the capture of the United States Frigate Chesapeake, by the British Frigate Leopard, fired the whole country with indignation, and fearfully increased the feelings of animosity that the repeated aggressions of the English nation had already raised to so high a pitch. Young Taylor partook of the general excitement to its full extent, and eagerly seized upon the occasion as a favorable moment to gratify his anxious desire to enter the army, and at the same time to assist in vindicating the outraged honor of his country's flag. Accordingly he lost no time in making his wishes known. He ~~therefore~~ applied to Mr. Jefferson for a commission in the army, and, by the aid of his powerful family connections, his application was successful;

and on the 3rd of May, 1808, when only eighteen years old, he received a commission as first lieutenant in the Seventh Regiment of United States Infantry. His young ambition was now satisfied, and a wide field opened before him for the gratification of his long indulged and ardent aspirations for military fame. He had almost from his earliest youth evinced a strong inclination for martial exercises, and his greatest pleasure consisted in playing the soldier and acting the mock hero at the head of an army of equally young patriots. In these mimic battles he exhibited, on a small scale, the germ of that genius for command, and military skill and talent, which have since been so eminently developed.

From the time he entered the army until the breaking out of the war with England, but little occurred in the life of the young lieutenant to break the monotonous round of every-day duty, to which soldiers are bound when not in actual service. He passed his time in the duties of his position, and in perfecting himself in a knowledge of the profession he had chosen. He brought to the task the same untiring industry and firm determination to understand the science of war, which he had ever shown in whatever pursuit or study he entered upon. It was probably during these comparatively leisure years, that he acquired that acquaintance with military tactics which is so necessary to the successful commander, and which afterwards served to place him amongst the first generals of the day.

Previous to the breaking out of hostilities, the English government, through its agents, had been unceasing in its efforts to induce the Miamies and other tribes of western Indians to take up arms against the United States, and had been unscrupulous in the use of money

and means to accomplish this end. Their agents had been partially successful in enlisting several savage tribes in their plans. The threatened outbreak, however, was discovered before their schemes had quite matured, and by the promptness, energy, and vigilance of General William Henry Harrison, who was then governor of the Northwest Territory, their intentions were anticipated, and a detachment of troops under his command was marched into the enemy's country. While on this expedition Governor Harrison determined to build a fort on the Wabash, in Indiana, about fifty miles above Vincennes, which was afterwards known as Fort Harrison. Lieutenant Taylor was actively engaged in this expedition, and in overawing the Indians in other quarters. At the beginning of 1812, Lieutenant Taylor was promoted to the rank of captain, by President Madison.

On the 19th of June, 1812, a declaration of war was formally declared against Great Britain by the United States Congress, and sanctioned by the President. Captain Taylor had but a few weeks before been placed in command of Fort Harrison, a rude and weak stockade, garrisoned by only fifty soldiers, most of whom, like himself, were worn down and disabled by their long and severe service. Almost in the very midst of an enemy's country, surrounded on all sides by a sleepless and savage foe, and kept constantly on the alert, night and day, for weeks together, it is not to be wondered at that Taylor and his men should nearly have sunk under the fatigue and labor they had so long endured. While in this wretched state, with scarcely a dozen men fit for service, he was attacked, on the night of the 5th of September, 1812, after an ineffectual attempt to get possession of the fort by stratagem, by a

force of four hundred and fifty Indians. But Captain Taylor had taken his measures with too much prudence to be captured either by stratagem or force, as weak as were his defences and few his men.

The attack was commenced about eleven o'clock at night, amidst the excitement and confusion occasioned by the burning of the lower block-house, which contained the property of the contractor, and which they had previously fired. The Indians, confident of victory, had completely surrounded the little garrison, and commenced firing upon it from all sides, simultaneously with the firing of the block-house. But Captain Taylor was undismayed, either by the overwhelming number of his enemy and their murderous fire, or the more dangerous element of destruction they had called to their aid. He calmly gave his orders for having the fire extinguished, but for a long time all efforts were fruitless. The fire communicated to the roof, in spite of every effort to check it. The scene at this time is represented as truly appalling. The raging of the fire, the yelling and howling of several hundred Indians, and the cries of women and children who had taken shelter there, together with the unceasing discharge of guns, must have been enough to appal the stoutest heart. Yet we find this stripling captain, only twenty-two years of age, boldly meeting them all, and giving his orders for suppressing the fire, and repelling the attack of his four hundred savage foes, with as much coolness as the oldest veteran. By his great presence of mind, and his well-directed efforts, the flames were at length arrested, and the fire finally subdued. Having extinguished the fire, and erected a temporary breastwork, the fire of the enemy was returned with redoubled vigor during the whole night, and with

such success, that at six o'clock in the morning, the enemy gave up the contest in despair, and withdrew their forces. In this gallant defence, Captain Taylor only lost two men killed, and two wounded. But his letter to General Harrison, giving a graphic and detailed account of the defence of Fort Harrison, and the incidents connected with it, will obviate the necessity of any other description of that terrible night, and be far more interesting. Captain Taylor says.—

“On Thursday evening, 3rd instant, after retreating, four guns were heard to fire in the direction where two young men (citizens who resided here) were making hay, about four hundred yards distant from the fort. I was immediately impressed with an idea that they were killed by the Indians, as the Mi-amies or Weas had that day informed me that the Prophet's party would soon be here for the purpose of commencing hostilities, and that they had been directed to leave this place, which they were about to do. I did not think it prudent to send out at that late hour of the night to see what had become of them, and their not coming convinced me that I was right in my conjecture. I waited until eight o'clock next morning, when I sent out a corporal with a small party to find them, if it could be done without running too much risk of being drawn into an ambuscade. He soon sent back to inform me, that he had found them both killed, and wished to know my further orders. I sent the cart and oxen, had them brought in and buried. They had been shot with two balls, scalped and cut in the most shocking manner. Late in the evening of the 4th instant, old Joseph Lenar, and between thirty and forty Indians, arrived from the Prophet's town, with a white flag: among whom were about ten women, and the

work might be formed to prevent their entering even there. I convinced the men that this could be accomplished, and it appeared to inspire them with new life; and never did men act with more firmness or desperation. Those that were able, (while others kept up a constant fire from the upper block-house and the two bastions,) mounted the roofs of the houses, with Doctor Clark at their head, (who acted with the greatest firmness and presence of mind, the whole time the attack lasted, which was seven hours,) under a shower of bullets, and in less than a moment threw off as much of the roof as was necessary. This was done, with one man killed, and two wounded, and I am in hopes neither of them dangerously. The man that was killed was a little deranged, and did not get off of the house as soon as directed, or he would not have been hurt; and although the barracks were several times in a blaze, and an immense quantity of fire against them, the men used such exertion, that they kept it under, and before day raised a temporary breastwork as high as a man's head. Although the Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of ball, and an innumerable quantity of arrows, during the whole time the attack lasted, in every part of the parade, I had but one other man killed—nor any other wounded inside the fort—and he lost his life by being too anxious. He got into one of the *gallies* in the bastions, and fired over the pickets, and called out to his comrades that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down in an instant, he was shot.

“One of the men that jumped the pickets, returned an hour before day, and running up towards the gate, begged for God's sake for it to be opened. I suspected it to be a stratagem of the Indians to get in, as I did

not recollect the voice; I directed the men in the bastion where I happened to be, to shoot him, let him be who he would, and one of them fired at him, but fortunately he ran up the other bastion, where they knew his voice, and Dr. Clark directed him to lie close to the pickets, behind an empty barrel that happened to be there, and at daylight I had him let in. His arm was broken in a most shocking manner, which he says was done by the Indians, which I suppose was the cause of his returning. I think it probable that he will not recover. The other they caught about one hundred and thirty yards from the garrison, and cut him all to pieces. After keeping up a constant fire until about six o'clock the next morning, which we began to return with some effect, after daylight they removed out of reach of our guns. A party of them drove up the horses that belonged to the citizens here, and as they could not catch them very readily, shot the whole of them in our sight, as well as a number of their hogs. They drove off the whole of the cattle, which amounted to sixty-five head, as well as the public oxen. I had the vacancy filled up before night (which was made by the burning of the block-house) with a strong row of pickets, which I got by pulling down the guard-house. We lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn, until we can get a supply, which I am in hopes will not be long. I believe the whole of the *Miamies* or *Weas* were among the Prophet's party, as one chief gave his orders in that language, which resembled Stone Eater's voice, and I believe *Negro Legs* was there likewise. A Frenchman here understands their different languages; and several of the *Miamies* or *Weas* that have been

brought them, they must either have abandoned the fort at once, or died with hunger. Supplies of provisions had been forwarded, but the wagons were captured, and the escort killed nearly to a man.

The Indians were greatly incensed at their disgraceful repulse, and the loss they suffered, and retaliated upon the Americans, by attacking an unarmed settlement, and murdering about twenty inhabitants. But the country was filled with the highest admiration for the gallant and noble conduct of the young captain. The repulse of four hundred Indians, by an officer only twenty-two years old, with only fifty men, three-fourths of whom were on the sick list, and arresting at the same time a destructive fire that had broken out in one of his block-houses, was looked upon as indicating the very first order of military talent, and deserving the highest commendation. For his valuable services to the country, and his daring courage on this occasion, the brevet rank of major was conferred upon Captain Taylor, being the first brevet commission conferred during the war, and the oldest one in the army. His praises were on every tongue throughout the whole western country, and the most flattering compliments were bestowed upon him. Amongst others, Major-General Hopkins spoke in the warmest terms of commendation of him, in a letter to Governor Shelby, of Kentucky. He said, "the firm and almost unparalleled defence of Fort Harrison, by Captain Zachary Taylor, has raised for him a fabric of character not to be effaced by eulogy." His victory, like all his subsequent triumphs, was won with an overwhelming odds against him, and it inspired the highest confidence amongst his superior officers, in his courage, skill, and judgment.

Shortly after the battle of Fort Harrison, Major Taylor was dispatched on an expedition against the Prophet's and Winnebago towns, under General Hopkins, in which he displayed the same vigilance and energy that had signalized his previous conduct. These towns, and also some other Indian villages, were entirely destroyed. In all these operations Major Taylor bore a conspicuous part, and his gallant conduct was favorably referred to by General Hopkins, in his official dispatches of these transactions against the Indians. By these active and efficient measures, the power of the Indians was nearly destroyed, and their strength so much broken, that the western settlers enjoyed comparative security from their incursions for many years.

Though Major Taylor, from the peculiar circumstances of his position, had no other opportunity during the war, of signalizing himself; yet he rendered equally valuable services to the country, by keeping in awe the numerous tribes of western savages, and preventing them, in a great measure, from rendering efficient aid to the British.

From the termination of the war in the beginning of 1815, to 1832, when the Black Hawk war broke out, he was stationed at various posts in the West, as the interests of the service required, always active and faithful in the performance of the duties of his profession, and scrupulously exact in requiring it from those under his command. In 1832, previous to which he had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he was assigned to the command of the regular troops in the Black Hawk war, and endured all the hardships and privations of that vexatious war. At the battle of the Bad-Axe, which resulted in the capture of Black Hawk and the Prophet, and in the overwhelming de-

feat of their forces, he particularly distinguished himself, and had an important agency in bringing the war to a close. He commanded the regular troops, in this fiercely contested and destructive engagement, as he had during the long and trying march through the wilderness in pursuit of the enemy.

An anecdote of Taylor, that occurred during the early scenes of the Black Hawk war, is related by C. F. Hoffman, Esq., which may here be appropriately introduced as illustrative of his character, and foreshadowing those remarkable qualities of mind that have since shone forth so brilliantly on so many trying occasions. As such it will undoubtedly prove interesting to the reader. Such incidents, indeed, of such a man are always not only interesting, but valuable and instructive as a preface or introduction to the character of the man.

Some time after Stillman's defeat by Black Hawk's band, Taylor, marching with a large body of volunteers and a handful of regulars in pursuit of the hostile Indian force, found himself approaching Rock River, then asserted by many to be the true north-western boundary of the State of Illinois. The volunteers, as Taylor was informed, would refuse to cross the stream. They were militia, they said, called out for the defence of the State, and it was unconstitutional to order them to march beyond its frontier into the Indian country. Taylor thereupon halted his command, and encamped within the acknowledged boundaries of Illinois. He would not, as the relater of the story said, budge an inch further without orders. He had already driven Black Hawk out of the State, but the question of crossing Rock River seemed hugely to trouble his ideas of integrity to the constitution on one side, and

military expediency on the other. During the night, however, orders came, either from General Scott or General Atkinson, for him to follow up Black Hawk to the last. The quietness of the Regular colonel meanwhile had rather encouraged the mutinous militia to bring their proceedings to a head. A sort of town-meeting was called upon the prairie, and Taylor invited to attend. After listening for some time very quietly to the proceedings, it became Rough and Ready's turn to address the chair. "He had heard," he said, "with much pleasure the views which several speakers had expressed of the independence and dignity of each private American citizen. He felt that all gentlemen there present were his equals—in reality, he was persuaded that many of them would in a few years be his superiors, and perhaps, in the capacity of Members of Congress, arbiters of the fortune and reputation of humble servants of the Republic like himself. He expected then to obey them as interpreters of the will of the people; and the best proof he could give that he would obey them, was now to observe the orders of those whom the people had already put in the places of authority, to which many gentlemen around him justly aspired. In plain English, gentlemen and fellow-citizens, the word has been passed on to me from Washington, to follow Black Hawk, and to take you with me as soldiers. I mean to do both. There are the flat-boats drawn up on the shore, and here are Uncle Sam's men drawn up behind you on the prairie."

"Stra-anger," added the man who told the story, "the way those militia-men sloped into those flat-boats was a caution. Not another word was said. Had Zach Taylor been with Van Rensselaer at Niagara

River, in the last war, I rayther think he'd a taught him how to get militia-men over a ferry."

Taylor, as is well known, did follow Black Hawk through the prairies of northern Illinois—through the wooded gorges, the rocky fells, the plashy rice-pools, the hitherto unbroken wilderness of western Wisconsin. The militia-men gave out from day to day; the country became impassable to horses, and the volunteer settlers who had first seized arms merely to repel an Indian foray, refused to submit their backs to the necessary burdens in carrying their own supplies through the deep swamps and almost impervious forests. At last the very Indians themselves, whom Taylor thus desperately pursued from day to day and week to week, began to sink from fatigue and exhaustion: they were found by our men stretched beside their trails, while yet the good Anglo-Norman blood of Taylor's band held out amid sufferings in the wilderness which the child of the forest himself could not endure. The battle of the Bad-Axe, and the rout of Black Hawk by Taylor, at length terminated this arduous march.

The steamer bearing Atkinson and his reinforcements, reached the junction of the Bad-Axe and the Mississippi, just as the encounter was over, and we believe brought Taylor along with his prisoners back to Fort Crawford, where, after landing the former, she passed on to St. Louis. When we remember the complimentary reception which Black Hawk met with all along our Atlantic border, how strange it seems that when the name of his captor was mentioned as the hero of Okee-cho-bee, his countrymen asked, "who is this Colonel Taylor that has just been brevetted a Brigadier?" Even as it was afterwards asked con-

cerning the Hero of Rio Bravo, "who is this Brigadier Taylor who has so brilliantly earned the brevet of major-general?" One might now, without extravagance, venture to predict that the captor of Black Hawk is as well known as was that warrior himself; and that he would probably be received by the people in a progress throughout the country, with demonstrations of affection and respect, at least equal to those which were showered upon the wily Sauk chief, the but too successful rival of the chivalrous, and loyal, out neglected Keokuk.

By the death of Colonel Morgan, Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor received the appointment of Colonel of the first regiment of Infantry, then stationed on the Upper Mississippi. He was employed there for several years as Indian Agent, in which capacity he won their confidence, and acquired great influence over them by the wisdom, prudence and tact with which he discharged his trust, and the unvarying kindness and good faith with which all his dealings and intercourse with them was marked. He was known among them as the "Big Chief."