

Commodore Conner, and through him the navy, by *appearing in full uniform*, a thing his officers, associated with him for years, had never witnessed.

In the meanwhile, Commodore Conner was cogitating over the most proper way to compliment General Taylor. Having heard of his peculiar disregard of military dress, he concluded he would make the visit in a manner comporting to General Taylor's habits, and consequently equipped himself in plain white drilling, and, unattended, came ashore.

The moment General Taylor heard that Commodore Conner had landed, he abandoned some heavy work he was personally attending to about the camp, and precipitately rushed into his tent, delved at the bottom of an old chest, and pulled out a uniform coat, that had peacefully slumbered for years in undisturbed quietude, slipped himself into it, in his haste fastening it so that one side of the standing collar was three button-holes above the other, and sat himself down as uncomfortably as can well be imagined. With quiet step, and unattended, Commodore Conner presented himself at General Taylor's tent. The noble representatives of the army and navy shook hands, both in exceeding astonishment at each other's personal appearance.

The wags of the army say that the above contains the only *authentic* account of General Taylor's ever being "headed," and that since that time, he has taken to linen roundabouts of the largest dimensions with more pertinacity than ever.

CHAPTER VI.

Barita Captured.—Surrender of Matamoras.—General Taylor in Matamoras.—A Treacherous Mexican Official.—Pursuit of Arista's Army.—Some of the Horrors of War.—Sad End to Dreams of Mexican Glory.—General Taylor Reinforced.—His March to Monterey, and arrival there.—Strength of the City.—The Preparations for its defence.—Attacked by the Americans.—Stormed.—Capitulation and Terms.—Gallant Conduct of the American Officers and Soldiers.—Comparative Strength of the two Forces.—American Loss in the Attack.

HAVING arranged with Commodore Conner the plan of an attack on Barita, a small village near the mouth of the Rio Grande, a force consisting of four companies of United States troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson, First infantry, two companies of Louisiana volunteers, under Captains Stockton and Tobin, and one company of Alabama volunteers, under General Desha, were detached to capture that place. On the 15th of May, the command landed at Brazos and immediately took up their march, a portion of Commodore Conner's fleet co-operating with the land-force. There being no resistance on the part of the Mexicans, the place was taken possession of by the American troops. The inhabitants fled in affright, leaving everything at the mercy of the captors, upon their first approach. The town contains a custom-house, but was only important as a resting place for such of our forces as were destined for Matamoras.

On the evening of the 14th of May, General Taylor reached his camp from Point Isabel, and determined on an immediate attack upon Matamoras, or at latest by the next day. His preparations for the attack, however, were not completed until the 17th. But on the morning of that day everything was ready, Colonel Wilson having been ordered to march from Barita, so as to reach Matamoras at the same time General Taylor should make his demonstration against the city.

Orders had been given to Colonel Twiggs to cross, when General Taylor was waited on by the Mexican general, Reguena, empowered by General Arista to treat for an armistice, until the two governments finally settled the difficulties pending. This cunning, on the part of the Mexican chief, was too apparent to General Taylor; he was aware that Matamoras was filled with the munitions of war, and time was only wanted to move them off. General Taylor replied to General Reguena, that an armistice could not be granted; he recapitulated the circumstances of the preceding month, when he had himself proposed an armistice, which General Ampudia had declined. He stated that he was receiving large reinforcements—that he would not then suspend hostilities which he had not invited nor provoked; he also said that the possession of Matamoras was a "sine qua non," and that the American troops would occupy the city, at the same time giving to General Arista and his forces leave to withdraw from the town, leaving behind the public property of every description. General Taylor remarked, that "Generals Ampudia and Arista had promised that the war should be conducted agreeably to the usage of civilized nations, and yet the Mexican forces had, in the battles of the 8th and 9th, stripped our dead, and mutilated their

bodies." General Reguena replied, "that the *women* (!) and *rancheros* did it, and that they could not be controlled." General Taylor said he would come over to Matamoras, and control such people for them.

General Reguena then left General Taylor, pledging himself that at three o'clock that evening he would come over with an answer from General Arista. General Taylor, accordingly, for the time, suspended his preparations for crossing. The answer promised by Reguena to be delivered to General Taylor, *positively* at three o'clock, did not come. General Taylor immediately ordered preparations to be made for crossing the Rio Grande; parties were sent up and down the river to secure all the boats that could be seen on either side. That night, just after dark, the army moved up the river, and encamped opposite the contemplated crossing place.

On the morning of the 18th, Captain Bliss, assistant adjutant-general of the "Army of Occupation," Major Craig, Captain Miles, and Lieutenant Britton, appeared on the banks of the Rio Grande, and sounded a parley. Lieutenant Britton then crossed the river with a white flag, and met a deputation of citizens from the *prefect*, who was the official civil representative of the city. The deputation wished to know the cause of the parley. Lieutenant Britton replied, that Captain Bliss, aid to the commanding general, wished to see the *prefect* in person, or whoever was the commanding officer of the city, as he had an official communication for him from his chief. The deputation crossed the river with Lieutenant Britton, met Captain Bliss, and invited the American deputation to Matamoras. They immediately crossed over, and met the *prefect* in his office, which was situated on the northwest side of the Plaza. Cap

tain Bliss then delivered to the *prefect* a letter from General Taylor, which *demanded a surrender of the town and all the public stores therein*, stating, at the same time, that his general had commanded him to say that the rights of individuals should be protected, that their religion should be respected, and that their courts of law and justice should proceed as they had done under the Mexican government, unless interfering with the rights of our government, and the necessary operations of the commanding general. Captain Bliss asked the *prefect* to answer in positive terms, whether he could return and report to his general that the town would be given up without a blow, or whether it would be necessary to carry it at the point of the sword, as in either emergency, General Taylor was determined to have it. The *prefect* then answered, "General Taylor can march his troops into the city at any hour that may suit his convenience." Captain Bliss then said, "here let the interview terminate."

While this conversation was going on, our army was crossing above the city. The east bank was defended by two eighteen-pounders, and the three batteries of our artillery. Colonel Twiggs ordered the regimental bands to strike up Yankee Doodle. The light companies of all battalions first went over, followed by the volunteer and regular cavalry. Lieutenant Hays, of the Fourth infantry, and ten select men, with Captain Walker, of the Rangers, first crossed the river, with orders to ascertain and report the number and position of the enemy, if near the river. Immediately after Lieutenant Hays had gone over, the flank companies of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth infantry, were thrown across, commanded by Captain Buchanan and Captain Larned. These commands were followed by Captain

Smith, of the Artillery battalion, with two companies, and also by Captain Ker's squadron of dragoons. After this force had crossed, Ridgeley's artillery was dismounted, and taken over in parts. In the meantime, the infantry already over had taken possession of a strong place, to be ready for an attack. In the midst of these busy operations, Captain Bliss arrived, and informed General Taylor of his interview with the *prefect*, and of the unconditional surrender of the town. General Taylor immediately ordered that portion of the American forces that had not crossed the river, to return to Fort Brown and cross there. Captain Ker, of the Dragoons, passed below where the troops were crossing, and raised upon the walls of Fort Parades, *the star-spangled banner*, unfolding it in proud defiance upon the west side of the Rio Grande.

The different regiments already on the west side of the Rio Grande were marched to their respective places of encampment, without noise or disorder, save when the flag of our country was unexpectedly seen waving from Fort Parades; discipline then gave way to feeling, and nine hearty cheers rent the air, and announced the occupation of Matamoras by American troops. That evening a small guard was established in Matamoras, to keep the peace. No troops, except under command, visited it that night. The Matamorians slept securely under the protection of the American government, a boon ever denied them by their own. Upon inquiry, it became evident that General Reguena had been sent over to General Taylor merely to gain time; that, even while he was negotiating for the surrender of the city, Arista's troops were throwing the public stores into the river, burying pieces of artillery in wells, and concealing other portions of the public stores in

out-of-the way places about the city. Arista commenced his retreat on the evening that General Reguena promised to bring a message from him to General Taylor, taking with him two pieces of artillery, and over four thousand men, leaving behind his sick and wounded.

A gloom was thrown over the brilliant events of this day by a most unfortunate accident; Lieutenant George Stevens, a graduate of West Point in 1843, and a most promising officer in the second dragoons, was swept by the swift current from his horse, while crossing the river at the head of his command. He had distinguished himself on the brilliant days of the 8th and 9th, and his untimely death was universally lamented. His friends, two days after he was drowned, had the melancholy satisfaction of recovering his body, and giving it the ceremonies of a soldier's burial within the walls of Fort Brown, beside the gallant hero that gave it his name.

Immediately upon taking possession of Matamoras our troops were distributed so as to occupy the upper and lower suburbs of the town, a small guard only being stationed in the city itself. Colonel Twiggs' command was stationed above the city along the banks of the river, his own head-quarters occupying a romantic spot directly on its brink. General Worth's command was located in the bend of the river below, having a fine view from his tent, and Lieutenant-Colonel Belknap's, of the surrounding country.

Directly opposite Colonel Belknap's, were to be seen a few torn tents, and a number of wiry-looking horses. They marked the head-quarters of Captain Walker of the Rangers. From Colonel Twiggs' tent you could see the volunteer regiments stretching away west almost as far as the eye could reach, centering around the

Fanques del Raminero, and then scattering off in little groups. The Seventh regiment nestled beneath the walls of Fort Brown, which they had so nobly defended. General Taylor found a few trees that appeared to be higher than their neighbors, under which he pitched his "head-quarters;" they could only be recognized from the tents about them by their disposition—they were arranged for shade and not with military precision.

Colonel Twiggs was appointed "Governor of the Town," and to his especial care was intrusted the taking possession of the military stores left by the Mexican Army. Don Jose Cardenas, the *prefect* of Matamoras at the time General Taylor took possession, was distinguished among his fellow-citizens for oppression, and for his hatred to foreigners. In surrendering the city the *prefect's* only care was to know if he could retain his office. He never stipulated for any privileges for the citizens, or seemed in any way to think of their interests. Immediately upon Colonel Twiggs taking command, he sent for this notable Cardenas, and asked him for an inventory of the public property. He stated, positively, that he knew of none, and persisted in declaring that none was left by the Mexican forces when they evacuated the city. Colonel Twiggs dismissed him, and entering the city, with information obtained from other quarters, soon began to find vast quantities of military stores, in almost all of the out-of-the-way places about the *Plaza*.

This outrageous trifling on the part of the *prefect* Colonel Twiggs was determined to notice. Accordingly he waited upon him the following morning at his office to give the gentleman what is denominated a "plain talk." The colonel labored under one difficulty—elo-

quent himself, it was a great drawback to have it marred by an indifferent translator. Fortunately, an American citizen by the name of Dugden, a very intelligent gentleman of Matamoras, and an object of the prefect's *special* oppression, offered his services as an interpreter. "I wish to give the falsifying *prefect* a proper notion of his conduct," said the colonel, with a variety of explications. "Can you, Mr. Dugden, do justice to what I say?" Mr. Dugden assented, and the "Governor" laid down the first paragraph of his lecture in English. Dugden did justice to what was said, and, it was thought, added a *little* on his own responsibility, much to the gratification of the governor.

The *prefect*, bearded in his own den, began to turn a variety of colors: his consternation increased, as the citizens of the town crowded into his office, and, by the wildest expressions of delight, testified their pleasure at what was going on. The *prefect* literally trembled in his shoes, and promised to act better, and honestly point out the hidden treasures. But he prevaricated so constantly, that he was finally dismissed, and ejected from the shadow of the office he still held, and he left the city, it was supposed to join Arista or some other general in the interior.

The day following the taking of Matamoras, Lieutenant-Colonel Garland, with all the regular and irregular cavalry of the army, about two hundred and fifty dragoons and rangers, started in pursuit of the retreating Mexicans, with orders to harass their rear, and to capture prisoners and baggage. On the 22d, Colonel Garland returned from his pursuit. He succeeded in capturing a small rear party, after a slight show of resistance on their part, in which two Mexicans were killed, twenty-two taken prisoners, and one wagon

with ammunition and clothing of an artillery company captured. Two of our own troops were slightly wounded. The scarcity of water, the barrenness of the country, and the condition of the horses, compelled Colonel Garland to return to Matamoras, after having penetrated over sixty miles into the enemy's country.

The army of the Mexicans, under General Arista, was but twenty-four hours ahead of our cavalry, retreating in good order—our officers stopping at the *ranches* where the enemy had, the night previous. A *ranchero*, at one of these stopping places, inquired with great simplicity of Captain Graham, where the Americans were going. He was told in pursuit of the retreating Mexican army. "Retreating army!" said the fellow, with astonishment; "why, General Ampudia stopped at my house last night, and said that his troops had conquered the Americans, and that he was now on his way to Mexico to take the news." The man was confounded, for it was impossible for him to believe his nation had been whipped in battle, and still more incomprehensible that a small number of American dragoons should seriously, and for purposes of war, really drive before them over three thousand troops.

For several successive days after the precipitate retreat of the Mexicans, the bodies of drowned Mexican soldiers were thrown ashore by the current of the river. Among the mass, were distinguishable several officers. Arista, in his official dispatch, mentions two who thus met their death. The body of Father Leary was taken out of the water near the fort, his canonicals still on, and his cross clutched tightly in his hand. As the Rio Grande fell, it left suspended to the overhanging trees,

the bodies caught in the meshes of their branches thus they hung in the air, until they dropped piecemeal into the water below. The very river itself, for a while, became offensive; mutilated corpses floated along, attacked by the voracious catfish, causing them to twitch and roll about, as if still in the agonies of death.

On the battle-fields, more glaringly horrible effects of war were presented; in the lone places in the deep chapparal, lay the mouldering bodies of those of the wounded who had crawled away to die. Buzzards and carrion crows wheeled in eccentric circles over these unmade graves; beetles and foul insects burrowed beneath them; jackals, at night, dug their way into the mounds of the dead, exposing the interior corruption to the passer-by. The descending rains would beat down the arch made by these desecrations, and the pile marking where a hundred Mexicans lay, gradually sunk, until it seemed as if the remains of so many human beings scarcely disfigured the surface of the earth. When a few months, or years shall have passed away, all vestiges will be gone. The result of so great a sacrifice, will be the memory of a few glorious deeds; the suffering, the sin, the dreadful offences in the sight of heaven, will only have permanent record in another world.

With the return of Lieutenant-Colonel Garland's command from the pursuit of the fugitive Mexican army under General Arista, ended the first great act in the history of the operations of our army on the Rio Grande, and with the capture of Matamoras, terminated all immediate prospect of fighting. The Mexican army was almost literally annihilated, and the broken fragments were fleeing for safety from our victorious troops. That proud and confident army of more than eight thousand of the best troops of Mexico, which but a few

days before, had marched into Matamoras without a doubt that the Americans would fall an easy prey to their arms, and whose victory magnificent preparations for celebrating had been made in advance—this army, so certain of victory, and so superior to General Taylor's, had been cut to pieces, and driven in confusion from the Rio Grande. The country had been completely subdued in a little more than six weeks from the day our army reached the point opposite Matamoras now occupied by Fort Brown. The condition of Matamoras and the state of affairs immediately following the occupancy of the city, by General Taylor, is thus described by an American who visited the scene of operations:—

"I arrived here yesterday morning, on the steamer Florida, after a passage of eight days, and find that the news of the taking of Matamoras was carried from here a week ago. There is nothing occurring here now of stirring interest, the fighting having ceased, for some weeks to come at least, and I am inclined to think that there will be no more of it on the Rio Grande. Our army must seek the enemy in their own country if they desire to meet them in any considerable bodies. Ampudia's defeat on the 8th and 9th, has ruined the Mexican army now in the north. They have lost everything, mules, pack-saddles, ammunition, arms, and men enough to strike terror to their hearts. Fort Polk, as this point is now called, is a complete museum at the present moment, with its Mexican booty—Mexican prisoners, mules, lances, saddles curiously wrought, eather pack-saddles, huge saddle-bags, muskets, ordnance, drums, copper cannon balls, grape-shot, letters, and all kinds of documents picked up on the ground where Ampudia was encamped. One of the officers,

who was in the two engagements, says that the supper which the Mexicans had, in their confidence prepared for themselves, and which they were obliged so suddenly to abandon, afforded a rich repast to our tired and hungry officers and men. He pronounces their liquors, chocolate, soups, roast beef, &c., to have been first rate. Ampudia's plate, which was valuable, was promptly returned to him. Most of the wounded have been sent to Corpus Christi, but there are still enough here to represent most painfully the sad results of war. Captain Page, whose under jaw was completely shot away, is in a fair way of recovering. Captain Hooe is walking about with the stump of his right arm dangling by his side, and appears to be in excellent humor. Colonel McIntosh, who was badly wounded, was stretched out yesterday in a Mexican wagon, trying to read. He was stabbed in the throat, or rather down the throat, in the neck, and in other parts of the body, and was repeatedly knocked down in the fight. Lieutenant Maclay, who was wounded in the action of the 9th, is here, with an awfully sore shin, across which a Mexican grape-shot passed, shaving a *little* closer than was safe, as it carried with it a slice of bone and sinew. Instances of individual heroism occurred at those two engagements which would have immortalized a Spartan.

"Volunteers are gathering here in crowds. Yesterday the Ondiaka, Mary Kingsland, Florida, and Orleans arrived with troops from New Orleans. A company of Texas rangers came down to Padre Island, and were crossing over last evening. Some are encamped near the fort, on the prairie, and six companies of Louisiana volunteers are encamped on the Point, three miles and a half distant, at the bar. I had the pleasure, yesterday, of meeting General Memucan Hunt, of the Texan vol-

unteers. The general looks well, and is anxious to be on the field. His men are hardy-looking fellows. All they pray for is to be permitted to go out through the interior, as our army marches on towards Mexico, and to take such towns as they can reach. Their knowledge of the country, their hardihood and experience in fighting Mexicans, fit them peculiarly for such service.

"There are more than twenty vessels lying here, inside and outside of the bar—one frigate of war, and the balance transports and trading vessels. The Florida drew less than seven feet, and bumped heavily on the bar as she came over yesterday morning. The sutlers put the screws to the poor soldiers here at a cruel rate, in the way of charges. It is really outrageous, and should be looked to by those in power."

—But owing to General Taylor's deficiencies in troops, supplies and means of transportation, he was unable to follow up his advantages by a prompt movement upon Monterey, before the enemy had time to recover from the effects of their late disastrous defeat, and recruit another army sufficiently strong to dispute his further progress. He was consequently compelled to remain in comparative inactivity at Matamoras, waiting for reinforcements and wagons, until the 5th of August, nearly three months after the defeat of the Mexican army. He had, however, received by the end of June large reinforcements, but not the means of transportation. If it had been in the power of Taylor to have marched to Monterey and attacked it while the Mexicans were panic struck by their recent decisive overthrow, that important city would have fallen into his hands almost without resistance. But circumstances beyond his control rendered this impossible, and he was left no other alternative than quietly to wait for

the means of making a forward movement. Small expeditions, however, were sent against several Mexican towns. Amongst others, Captain McCulloch captured Camargo, Mier and Reynosa.

While the Mexicans were suffering defeat abroad, they were threatened with a more serious enemy at home, and they seemed on the eve of another of those periodical revolutions which have distracted that wretched country for the last twenty years. Misfortune being considered a crime by her rulers, Parades, the President, superseded and recalled the defeated generals, with the view of punishing them for not wringing a victory from the Americans in spite of fate. But Arista was determined not to trust himself in the hands of his government, and began to organize an insurrectionary army, with which to dispute the authority of the President of the Republic. Parades was re-elected, however, on the 16th of June, 1846, which put an end, for a time, to the rebellious symptoms of the refractory general. Upon the re-organization of the new government, Aravalo was sent to Monterey to supersede Arista, and Ampudia to San Luis Potosi.

Active preparations were at once entered into for strongly fortifying Monterey upon the arrival of the new commander, and even before. Expecting that it would be the next to be attacked after the fall of Matamoras, every means were immediately put in requisition to place it in a complete state of defence. It was naturally one of the very strongest places in Mexico. During the war for the independence of Mexico from the Spanish yoke, this city was held by few Mexican troops for ten years, against the whole Spanish power. These natural advantages had been greatly improved by artificial defences, and the town was considered im-

pregnable. The only access to the city for an invading army, is up steep and rugged acclivities, every inch of which could be swept by the guns of the fortifications. And it seemed like walking into the very jaws of death to attempt to storm it. Yet all these things did not for an instant deter General Taylor from his contemplated attack upon this strong-hold of Mexico.

Near the end of August, accordingly, General Worth was ordered to advance to Seralvo, and there await further instructions. Having ascertained at this place that Monterey had been reinforced by three thousand men under the command of General Ampudia, he advised General Taylor of the movement. This reinforcement increased the force of the garrison to ten thousand men, and decided him in his determination to move on without further delay to Monterey, and attack it at once. He therefore marched from Matamoras on the 7th of September, leaving General Patterson in command of that city, and all the forces between it and Camargo.

Leaving behind everything not absolutely necessary in the proposed attack, and calculated to impede his movements, he sent forward to Seralvo such supplies as were immediately required for the subsistence of his troops, and then hastened rapidly forward himself to the same place. He did not long wait for reinforcements, however, notwithstanding his army was considered by those who knew the strength of Monterey, so inadequate to the dangerous and difficult enterprise. His force did not much exceed six thousand men, while the city was garrisoned by ten thousand men at least. But hastily completing his arrangements, he moved on towards the devoted city of his destination, with all possible speed. Occasional attempts were

made to obstruct his passage by small skirmishing parties. But no serious opposition was offered. He ascertained from deserters from Monterey, that preparations for a desperate resistance were going on with much activity, and everything indicated that the city would be defended with great resolution. This information, however, only had the tendency to hasten his movements, not only from the eagerness of himself and men to signalize themselves after so long a period of comparative inactivity, but to make the attack before the enemy had time to complete their defences.

After a march of twelve days, from the time he left Matamoras, he arrived at the Walnut Springs, a delightful position, within three miles of the city, and encamped there on the morning of the 19th of September. From this position he had an unobstructed view of the city of Monterey. It is situated in a beautiful valley, a part of which is extremely fertile, and highly cultivated. Almost all tropical fruits grow there in abundance. It is situated amidst lofty mountains on three sides and an open valley on the other, "and fortified with thick stone walls in the old Spanish style, with ditches and bastions, and bristling with cannon. The flat-roofed houses were all converted into fortifications, every street was barricaded, and every house was bristling with musketry." On one side was the Bishop's Palace, an extremely strong and well fortified fort; on the other were redoubts, and in the rear a river. Besides its garrison of ten thousand men, it contained a population of fifteen thousand, which could supply nearly three thousand volunteers. Thus the Mexican force was, in reality, but little if any short of thirteen thousand men for its defence, whilst the force of General Taylor was less than seven thousand men; when

in reality the besieging force should at least be double the besieged, in order to approach near an equality of strength. The reader will understand from this brief description of the city which the American force under Taylor were about to attack, the dangers of the attempt, and the almost overwhelming disadvantages which he had to fight against.

After establishing his camp at Walnut Springs, the nearest suitable position to Monterey, General Taylor ordered a reconnoissance of the ground in question, which was executed on the evening of the 19th, by the engineer officers, under Major Mansfield. A reconnoissance of the eastern approaches was at the same time made by Captain Williams, topographical engineers. The examination made by Major Mansfield proved the entire practicability of throwing forward a column to the Saltillo road, and thus turning the position of the enemy. Deeming this to be an operation of essential importance, orders were given to Brevet-Brigadier-General Worth, commanding the Second division, to march with his command on the 20th; to turn the hill of the Bishop's Palace; to occupy a position on the Saltillo road, and carry the enemy's detached works in that quarter, where practicable. The First regiment of Texan mounted volunteers, under command of Colonel Hays, was associated with the Second division on this service. Captain Sanders, engineers, and Lieutenant Meade, topographical engineers, were also ordered to report to General Worth, for duty with his column.

At two o'clock, p. m. on the 29th, the Second division took up its march. It was soon discovered, by officers who were reconnoitring the town, and communicated to General Worth, that its movement had