

Our loss is reported—killed and wounded about five hundred—Mexican loss about the same. American force six thousand; Mexican twelve thousand, and the advantage of fortifications, and the city fortified at every point, even to the tops of the houses.

The capture of Monterey has been described in eloquent terms by a thousand pens, both in prose and poetry, and has excited the admiration of Europe as well as America. Few military enterprises display more cool, determined bravery on the part of soldiers, or more true generalship and chivalric bearing than did the conduct of General Taylor and his officers, in the storming of this city. It is therefore natural that the enthusiasm the brilliant event has inspired should have found utterance in eloquent verse as well as in sober prose. Among the many attempts to give coloring and life to the exciting and novel incidents connected with the capture of Monterey, the following is probably the most heart-stirring and eloquent:

STORMING OF MONTEREY

We were not many—we who stood
Before the iron sea that day—
Yet many a gallant spirit would
Give half his head if he but could
Have been with us at Monterey.

Now here, now there, the shot it hailed
In deadly drifts of fiery spray,
Yet not a single soldier quailed
When wounded comrades round them wailed
Their dying shout at Monterey.

And on—still on our column kept
Through walls of flame its withering way;

Where fell the dead, the living steep
Still charging on the guns which swept
The slippery streets of Monterey.

The foe himself recoiled aghast,
When, striking where the strongest lay,
We swooped his flanking batteries past,
And braving full their murderous blast,
Stormed home the towers of Monterey

Our banners on those turrets wave,
And there our evening bugles play,
Where orange boughs above their grave
Keep green the memory of the brave
Who fought and fell at Monterey.

We are not many—we who pressed
Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share that warrior rest,
Than not have been at Monterey.

The only act of General Taylor's during his whole operations in Mexico, and indeed, from the day he encamped at Corpus Christi, which has not received the approbation of his government, as even this has, of the country, is the terms of capitulation granted to Mexico in the surrender of Monterey. It was thought by the administration that he should have insisted upon the unconditional surrender of the Mexican army. His course was not only condemned by the President and on the floor of Congress by prominent friends of the administration, but an indirect vote of censure was passed by the lower house of Congress for his granting too liberal conditions to the enemy. The general opinion prevails amongst military men, however, and those best competent to judge of the power of General Taylor to enforce more favorable terms, that they were highly honorable to the American arms, and advan-

tageous to the government; and further, that they were such as humanity and a proper regard for the lives of his soldiers dictated. He might have insisted, and possibly have forced an unconditional submission; but it would have been at a sacrifice that the advantages thus acquired, would not have warranted. The best explanation, however, of Taylor's motives, and the best defence of his conduct, will be found in the following reply to the letter of the Secretary of War:

"In reply to so much of the communication of the Secretary of War, dated October 13th, as relates to the reasons which induced the convention resulting in the capitulation of Monterey, I have the honor to submit the following remarks:

"The convention presents two distinct points. *First*, the permission granted the Mexican army to retire with their arms, &c. *Secondly*, the temporary cessation of hostilities for the term of eight weeks. I shall remark on these in order.

"The force with which I marched on Monterey was limited by causes beyond my control to about six thousand men. With this force, as every military man must admit, who has seen the ground, it was entirely impossible to invest Monterey so closely as to prevent the escape of the garrison. Although the main communication with the interior was in our possession, yet one route was open to the Mexicans throughout the operations, and could not be closed, as were also other minor tracks and passes through the mountains. Had we, therefore, insisted on more rigorous terms than those granted, the result would have been the escape of the body of the Mexican force, with the destruction of its artillery and magazines, our only advantage being the capture of a few prisoners of war, at the expense of

valuable lives and much damage to the city. The consideration of humanity was present to my mind during the conference which led to the convention, and outweighed in my judgment the doubtful advantages to be gained by a resumption of the attack upon the town. This conclusion has been fully confirmed by an inspection of the enemy's position and means since the surrender. It was discovered that his principal magazine, containing an immense amount of powder, was in the Cathedral, completely exposed to our shells from two directions. The explosion of this mass of powder, which must have ultimately resulted from a continuance of the bombardment, would have been infinitely disastrous, involving the destruction not only of Mexican troops, but of non-combatants, and even our own people, had we pressed the attack.

"In regard to the temporary cessation of hostilities, the fact that we are not at this moment, within eleven days of the termination of the period fixed by the convention, prepared to move forward in force, is a sufficient explanation of the military reasons which dictated this suspension of arms. It paralyzed the enemy during a period when, from the want of necessary means, we could not possibly move. I desire distinctly to state, and to call the attention of the authorities to the fact, that, with all diligence in breaking mules and setting up wagons, the first wagons in addition to our original train from Corpus Christi, (and but one hundred and twenty-five in number,) reached my head-quarters on the same day with the secretary's communication of October 13th, viz: the 2nd inst. At the date of the surrender of Monterey, our force had not more than ten days' rations, and even now, with all our endeavors, we have not more than twenty-five. THE TASK OF

FIGHTING AND BEATING THE ENEMY IS AMONG THE LEAST DIFFICULT THAT WE ENCOUNTER—the great question of supplies necessarily controls all the operations in a country like this. At the date of the convention, I could not of course have foreseen that the Department would direct an important detachment from my command without consulting me, or without waiting the result of the main operation under my orders.

"I have touched the prominent military points involved in the convention of Monterey. There were other considerations which weighed with the commissioners in framing and with myself in approving the articles of the convention. In the conference with General Ampudia, I was distinctly told by him that he had invited it to spare the further effusion of blood, and because General Santa Anna had declared himself favorable to peace. I knew that our government had made propositions to that of Mexico to negotiate, and I deemed that the change of government in that country since my last instructions, fully warranted me in entertaining considerations of policy. My grand motive in moving forward with very limited supplies had been to increase the inducements of the Mexican Government to negotiate for peace. Whatever may be the actual views or disposition of the Mexican rulers or of General Santa Anna, it is not unknown to the Government that I had the very best reason for believing the statement of General Ampudia to be true. It was my opinion at the time of the convention, and it has not been changed, that the liberal treatment of the Mexican army and the suspension of arms, would exert none but a favorable influence in our behalf.

"The result of the entire operation has been to throw the Mexican army back more than three hundred miles

to the city of San Luis Potosi, and to open the country to us as far as we choose to penetrate it up to the same point.

"It has been my purpose in this communication not so much to defend the convention from the censure which I deeply regret to find implied in the secretary's letter, as to show that it was not adopted without cogent reasons, most of which occur of themselves to the minds of all who are acquainted with the condition of things here. To that end I beg that it may be laid before the General-in-Chief and Secretary of War."

No farther justification of the conduct of General Taylor, for the terms of the capitulation, will be required, it is confidently believed, than this plain, but dignified and unanswerable statement of the reasons that influenced him in not demanding more rigid conditions from an enemy yet greatly superior to his own force, and capable of a long and bloody resistance, or of cutting their way from the city. He gained all the advantages of a substantial victory, and only submitted to an armistice of eight weeks because he had not the power to prosecute further operations in his then weakened condition. And while he consented to suspend hostilities until he should be able to resume them, he tied the hands of his enemy during the same time. If, therefore, he conceded to the Mexicans certain advantages, he did so because he had not the ability to withhold them.

In reference to the concluding sentence of the foregoing letter, it is proper to remark, that the correspondence of General Taylor is addressed to the "Adjutant-General of the army," at head-quarters in Washington. On the day after it bears date, General Taylor again wrote to the Department, saying: "I have formally

notified the Mexican general-in-chief that the temporary suspension of arms agreed upon in the convention of Monterey will cease on the 13th instant, the date at which the notice will probably reach San Luis Potosi. This notification was sent by Major Graham, topographical engineer, who left on the 6th instant.

"You will perceive from my 'orders' No. 139, what arrangements have been made for the occupation of Saltillo at the earliest moment by our troops. Whether our operations are pushed forward towards San Luis or not, the occupation of Saltillo is important—politically, as the capital of Coahuila, and, in a military view, as covering an important region from which we may draw supplies.

"Brigadier-General Wool, with a portion of his force, arrived at Monclova on the 29th of October, and is now joined by the rear division. He reports no practicable route to Chihuahua, except the one by Parras, which will bring him within a few leagues of Saltillo. He inquires what is to be gained by going to Chihuahua? And I am free to answer, nothing at all commensurate with the excessive length of his line of operations. Chihuahua, moreover, is virtually conquered, and can be occupied at any moment, while we hold Saltillo and Santa Fe. I shall instruct General Wool to remain at Monclova, where there are supplies, until I can determine what disposition to make of his column, which cannot be done until I visit Saltillo.

"I have taken the first steps towards organizing the expedition on Tampico, and propose to accompany it, for the purpose at least of commanding a covering force. There will be some delay for the want of means of land transport.

"The information received since my communication

of October 15th, relative to the route hence to San Luis, renders it more than probable that, from the want of permanent water, it will be impossible to march a large force from Saltillo to that city. I hope to acquire certain information on this point in a few days."

General Taylor wrote from his camp near Monterey, on the 12th of November, as follows: "The communication of the Secretary of War of October 22, with its inclosures, by the hands of Major McLane, was received this morning. You will have seen by my orders, and my dispatch of the 9th, what measures have been taken to conclude the armistice and to occupy Saltillo. Being advised by special express from Matamoras of Major McLane's approach, I had postponed my intended departure this day for Saltillo, until his arrival. As I deem it still important to occupy that position, for reasons to be explained below, I shall march thither to-morrow, according to my first intention. On my return—say by the 20th instant—I shall probably be able to inform the Department more fully on certain important points connected with our operations; but I now avail myself of the return of Major McLane to Washington, to state briefly my views on some of the topics embraced in the secretary's communication.

"Without active operations towards San Luis Potosi from this quarter, I still deem the occupation of Saltillo important for three reasons: *First*, as a necessary outpost of the main force at Monterey, covering as it does the important defile which leads from the low country to the table land, and also the route to Monclova: *Secondly*, as controlling a region from which we may obtain considerable supplies of breadstuffs and

cattle, viz.: the fertile country around Parras. and, *Thirdly*, as the capital of Coahuila, which renders it very important in a political point of view.

"I have already represented to the department the difficulties to be encountered in a forward movement upon San Luis, and the amount of force which would be necessary to insure success. Those reasons only apply to the country beyond Saltillo. I consider the occupation of that point as a necessary complement to our operations, and to the policy of holding a defensive line, as the Sierra Madre, and trust the Department will concur with me in this view.

"As already reported, Brigadier-General Wool is now at Monclova, having found no practicable route to Chihuahua, save the well-known but very circuitous one by Parras. I fully agree with the Department that no commensurate benefit is likely to result from the march on Chihuahua of General Wool's column, and shall accordingly direct him to suspend his movement in that direction. The occupation of Saltillo in force renders it still less necessary that Chihuahua should be occupied. I cannot yet determine specifically what disposition to make of General Wool's column. Meanwhile I have directed him to remain in his present position until further orders.

"In regard to the expedition against Vera Cruz after a good deal of reflection upon the subject, I feel bound to express my conviction that four thousand men will be a force quite too small for the purpose contemplated. In my dispatch of October 15th, I stated twenty-five thousand troops, of which ten thousand were to be regulars, as the least force that should make a descent in that quarter, with the view of marching on the capital. I now consider that, simply to invest and take Vera

Cruz, and of course hold the position, we should have ten thousand troops, of which four thousand, if possible, should be regulars. It is quite probable that a smaller force, even four thousand, might effect a landing and carry the town; but could they sustain themselves till the castle of San Juan de Ulloa should be reduced by famine? The country lying between Vera Cruz and the city of Mexico is populous, and at least one portion (Puebla) understood to be very loyal. Would not a force be brought against us, before the castle could be reduced, sufficiently strong to endanger our safety, cut off as we should be from succor? When to these considerations we add the uncertainty of weather during the winter season, rendering our communications with the fleet liable to interruption, I think it will be seen that the force should be large enough not only to land and invest the town, but also to hold itself secure against any attack from the interior, and for such purpose I consider ten thousand men quite as small a force as should be ventured.

"A force of ten thousand men cannot be spared from the occupation of the line of the Sierra Madre; four thousand may be diverted from that object; and if to these six thousand fresh troops from the United States were added at the proper time, the expedition might be undertaken with a promise of success. I propose therefore, to proceed with the preparation for a movement on Tampico, and, after accomplishing everything that is to be done in that quarter, I will, if the Department approve, hold four thousand men, of which perhaps three thousand regulars, ready to embark at some point on the coast, and effect a junction with the additional force from the States. The movement towards Tampico will not produce any delay if my

views are adopted; and I consider it quite important to occupy Victoria and the lower portion of Tamaulipas, after securing properly the line to be held in this quarter.

"I conceive it all important, having in view the Mexican character, that as little should be left to accident as possible, and that we should be careful, as far as human foresight can provide, to avoid the smallest liability to disaster. A descent upon a hostile coast, notoriously dangerous, and in an inclement season of the year, is an operation requiring the most careful preparations and exact management, and possessing, under the most favorable circumstances, more or less elements of failure. It seems the part of prudence, therefore, to take a sufficient force to meet any contingency that may arise.

"Being pressed for time I have given my views briefly, and perhaps somewhat crudely, on the most important points presented in the dispatch of the secretary. There are other topics which will probably claim my attention, but which must be now passed over. I would only suggest that, in the event of an expedition to Vera Cruz, the heavy ordnance, engineers, stores, &c., should be shipped direct from the North."

After the reduction of Monterey, General Taylor took up his headquarters in that city, and remained there during the armistice, or until it should be terminated by the orders of either the American or Mexican governments, awaiting reinforcements, and re-organizing and disciplining his forces, preparatory to his contemplated movement upon San Louis Potosi. He was also actively employed in establishing and keeping open a line of communication between Monterey and the

Rio Grande. On the 13th of November, General Taylor marched to Saltillo in company with General Worth's command, which was designed to operate against that city. They took possession of it without resistance. General Worth, with a force of eight hundred men, was left in command, and General Taylor returned to Monterey. General Wool, who was at Monclova, with a force of two thousand four hundred men, was ordered, by General Taylor, to take possession of Parras.

In the meantime Santa Anna, who had returned from exile, at Havana, had assembled an army of twenty-two thousand men, and concentrated it upon San Louis Potosi. This city he strongly fortified, and made it a depot for all kinds of provisions and military stores. After waiting in vain for many weeks for the advance of this powerful army to attack him at Monterey, General Taylor resolved to make a demonstration towards San Louis, with a view of drawing him out, and obtaining a battle. On the 15th of December therefore, he left Monterey with two regiments of volunteers, having three days previously dispatched General Twiggs, with the main body of the regulars, to form a junction with General Patterson at Victoria. On arriving at Montemoraes, however, a messenger reached him from Saltillo, informing him that General Worth, the commander at that place, was hourly expecting an attack from Santa Anna, at the head of his whole army. He therefore immediately gave orders for counter-marching, and falling back upon Monterey, and from thence took up his line of march for Saltillo on the 20th, accompanied by General Twiggs' division of regulars. But here again he was doomed to be disappointed in meeting the enemy. Before he reached Saltillo, he