

of Buena Vista, as he ordered the wagons to bring the Mexican wounded from the battle-field, and heard him as he at once cautioned his own men that the wounded were to be treated with mercy, could doubt that he was alive to all the kinder impulses of our nature.

The indiscretions of youth he chides with paternal kindness, yet with the decision which forbids their repetition, and the young men of his army feel that it is a pleasure to gather around him, because they know that they are as welcome as though they visited the hearthstone of their own home, and they are always as freely invited to partake of what he has to offer as if they were under the roof of a father. His conduct in sparing the deserters who were captured at Buena Vista, exhibited at the same time in a remarkable manner his benevolence and his judgment. "Don't shoot them," said he; "the worst punishment I will inflict is to return them to the Mexican army." When Napoleon said to one of his battalions, "inscribe it on their flag: 'No longer of the army of Italy,'" he used an expression which was deemed so remarkable, that history preserved it for the admiration of future ages; yet it was not more forcible as an illustration of his power in touching the springs of human action, than is that of General Taylor illustrative of the manner in which he would make an example for the benefit of the army.

5. *He is a man of business habits.* I never have known General Taylor to give up a day to pleasure. I have never visited his quarters without seeing evidences of the industry with which he toiled. If his talented adjutant was surrounded by papers, so was the general. And though he would salute a visitor kindly, and bid him with familiar grace to amuse him-

self until he was at leisure, he never would interrupt the duties which his station called him to perform. When these were closed for the day, he seemed to enjoy to a remarkable degree the vivacity of young officers, and to be glad to mingle in their society. As a conversationist, I do not think General Taylor possesses great power. He uses few words, and expresses himself with energy and force, but not fluently. His language is select. I would say, however, from my knowledge of the man, that he is entirely capable of producing anything in the shape of an order or letter, which has ever appeared over his signature; and in saying so much, I understand myself as asserting that he is master of his mother tongue, and can write about as effectively and handsomely as he can fight.

Such then is the picture of the man—not of the general—who won upon my esteem. I am not in the habit of eulogizing men, and have indulged on this occasion, because I desire to describe to you, with the exactness of truth, those qualities which, combined in General Taylor, made him appear to me *as a first rate model of a true American character*. Others will dwell upon the chivalry he has so often displayed, and his greatness so conspicuously illustrated upon the field of battle; I formed my ideas of the man when he was free from duty, and had no motive to appear in any other light than such as was thrown upon him by nature, education, and principles.

In personal appearance, General Taylor is described to be about five feet eight inches high, very thick set, rather inclining to corpulency, and slightly stoop-shouldered. He weighs about two hundred pounds, and has remarkably short legs in proportion to the length of his body, in consequence of which, he looks like a

much taller man than he really is, when in a sitting position. He has a fine head, high forehead, light, keen, penetrating eye, indicating uniform good-humor, and firm, compressed lips. His hair is almost white, his face care-worn, but extremely intelligent, and almost uniformly lit up with a benevolent smile. When speaking to any one he is in the habit of partly closing one eye, is extremely fond of a joke, and ever ready with a witty repartee, or a kind word for all who address him. He dresses, at all times, with great simplicity, utterly eschewing tight clothes, and even a military coat. He has an unconquerable dislike for a uniform, and generally is seen with a linen roundabout, cotton pantaloons, and a straw hat, in warm weather, and his celebrated brown overcoat, that protected him, during his Florida campaigns, in cold or rainy seasons.

The most remarkable traits of General Taylor's character are the wisdom and foresight with which he lays his plans, the energy and promptness with which he executes them, and his firmness, decision and self-possession in the hour of trial. No emergency, however unlooked-for or sudden, no danger, however imminent and threatening, and no contingency, of whatever nature, are ever able to throw him off his guard, or disturb his evenly balanced mind. He always proves himself equal to every emergency, and rises as the dangers that beset him increase; and the resources of his mind are as inexhaustible as his will is indomitable and his courage unyielding. All his movements are characterized by the highest qualities of a soldier. Calm, sagacious, resolute, ready;—with a boldness which never falters, a watchfulness never at fault, and a comprehensiveness of plan embracing all contingencies, he has won for himself the very highest military

renown which it has ever been the fortune of an American soldier to reach. His letters and dispatches are models of military writing, not surpassed by the justly renowned "Wellington Dispatches." His manly assertion of his rights as the commanding general, shows him to be possessed of moral courage in as eminent a degree as he is of physical. It affords some relief to the horrors of this war, that it has brought out to the knowledge of the country, and the world, the fact that we possess a man and a soldier of such extraordinary merits.

Great emergencies, it is said, produce great men. If they do not produce them, they at least bring them to light. So it has been in the unhappy war between us and a sister republic. A man of simple and unostentatious habits—who, though possessing great wealth chose to follow the profession of arms, and was satisfied with the common routine of military life, never thrusting himself into notice, but simply doing his duty in a quiet way—is by the force of circumstances brought prominently before the public, and is found to possess the highest military talents, and every other quality which men are accustomed to admire. In early life, and in humble rank, he successfully defended a Western fort against a superior force of the enemy. His modest dispatch recording the defence, had almost faded from remembrance. At a later period, a brilliant victory was won by him in the Florida war, and even with that we had almost ceased to be conversant. There was no crisis of public affairs, or essential risk of the national honor, to make these events of historical or political importance. In comparative retirement, or at most in the command of distant posts, the unaffected, though successful commander, passed away years of

obscurity. We cannot tell whether this was congenial to his feelings or not; but be this as it may, he knew how to "bide his time," and the want of such knowledge destroys the prospects and usefulness of many a really great man.

How many of our most gifted public servants, impatient of delay, have endeavored to control destiny itself, and create the events upon which their advancement depended. How many bright spirits have been shrouded in darkness, before they have reached even mid-day career. General Taylor, fortunate in his philosophy as in his temperament, permitted events to take their course, tranquil in retirement, and calm even when forgotten. But all at once he develops the qualities of a great general. In the most critical situations his judgment foresees what his valor wins. No matter what may be the difficulties around him, he meets and overcomes them all. In strategy as well as hand to hand, he evinces superior skill, and when the nation almost gives him up for lost, again and again he sends back to it intelligence that he has conquered. In no page of our history do we find recorded four such hard fought battles, fought at such fearful odds, as those which have placed such laurels on the brow of General Taylor, and the brave troops under his command. The country is astonished to find it possesses such a man!

CHAPTER IX.

General Taylor at Monterey—Punishment of Banditti—Lawlessness of Texan Rangers—Expedition against Huejutla—General Taylor's Force—Letter to Mr. Marcy—Departure from Mexico—Attachment of his Soldiers—His Reception in the United States—His Political Opinions—Presidential Question.

AFTER the dreadful defeat of the Mexicans at Buena Vista, the army under Santa Anna precipitately fell back upon San Luis Potosi, claiming, in the mean time, the honor of a triumphant victory over General Taylor, but making no further attempt to molest the American forces in that quarter. General Taylor retired to his camp at Monterey, where he was compelled to remain, and repose upon the laurels he had won. He was too much crippled by the severe losses he had suffered at Buena Vista, weakened as his forces had previously been by the large drafts made upon them to strengthen the line of operations on the Capital of Mexico by the way of Vera Cruz, to deem it safe to attempt to march upon the Capital from the Rio Grande. But he kept a vigilant eye upon the movements of the marauding parties of the enemy who were hovering in his vicinity, under the command of Generals Urrea and Canales, who had learned sufficient wisdom from former experience not to attempt to molest the lion in his lair, or to venture within the