

sailors though contented themselves with quietly getting drunk and riding about the camp. The army officers, as I have said before, took no notice of their pranks. One day an old "salt" rode by General Scott's quarters on a donkey, and some officers standing by observing that he was, as they thought, seated too far back, called out to him to shift his seat more amidships. "Gentlemen," said Jack, drawing rein: "This is the first craft I ever commanded, and it's d—d hard if I cannot ride on the quarter deck."

The second dragoons were sent down to Medellin about this time and had a fight with the Mexicans. One of the midshipmen of the squadron, Thomas Young by name, was sent with a dispatch to the commanding officer just before the battle. He was mounted on an old cavalry charger, and not being a very good horseman was unable to manage him. When the charge was sounded the horse started off, and Midshipman Young had the honor of leading the way across the bridge just below Medellin. He was highly complimented by the colonel of the regiment for his gallantry, and still lives to congratulate himself upon his narrow escape.

CHAPTER IX.

OPENING OF THE BOMBARDMENT OF VERA CRUZ—CAPTAIN TATNALL AND THE SPITFIRE—COMMODORE M. C. PERRY ASSUMES COMMAND OF THE SQUADRON—COMMODORE CONNER'S MISTAKE—THE NAVY LANDS SIX HEAVY GUNS—THE MOSQUITO FLEET—THE NAVY BATTERY—IT OPENS FIRE ON VERA CRUZ—INCIDENTS—PASSED MIDSHIPMAN FAUNTLEROY—SURRENDER OF VERA CRUZ AND THE CASTLE OF SAN JUAN DE ULLOA—OUR ARMY TAKES POSSESSION—BATTLE OF CERRO GORDO—A VISIT TO THE CASTLE AND CITY—OUR MARINES.

As well as I recollect the regular bombardment of Vera Cruz by the Army commenced March 22d, 1847. On that day General Scott formally summoned the town, and notified the authorities of the consequences of a non-surrender.

I have omitted to say that the day after the landing, March 10th, we were awakened by the sound of heavy firing, and going on deck found that it was caused by Captain Tatnall in the *Spitfire*. He had gone in under Point Hornos and opened a fire upon the town and castle, *without orders*. He was quickly recalled by the commodore, and as he left his exposed position was loudly cheered by the Army. He lost no men by this affair, which was much regretted by the gallant captain—he could not rid himself of the old English idea that there *must* be a large list of killed and wounded to certify to a brave action. The "butcher's bill" at Algiers in 1816, in Lord Exmouth's squadron, must have satisfied the English nation in this particular.

On the 21st of March, shortly after the hoisting of the colors we were electrified by the signal from the flagship: "Commodore Perry commands the squadron." I think Commodore Perry had gone north after the Tobasco affair, and had but lately returned in the *Mississippi*. Commodore Con-

ner had been in bad health for some time, and willingly turned over the squadron to Commodore Perry; but the youngest reefer in the squadron felt that he had made a mistake in yielding the command when he did. He should have waited until Vera Cruz fell, at least.

The effect of this change was soon seen, and Commodore Perry's first order was to land six heavy guns (three 64-pounder shell guns and three long 32-pounders), and place them in battery to assist General Scott's siege guns. This was the most efficient co-operation we could give the army.

It is generally thought that Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan were bombarded by the fleet. I have seen this stated in more than one "history," and recollect going to see a panorama in Boston shortly after the war which represented the fleet bombarding the castle while the troops were being landed on the north side of Vera Cruz.

The castle was thought to be too strong to risk the vessels of the fleet against it—there were no iron-clads then—but I believe that if it had not surrendered when it did, we were to have tried the effect of an escalade.

On the 22d of March the Mosquito fleet consisting of the steamers *Spitfire* and *Vixen*, and gunboats *Reefer*, *Bonita*, *Petrel* and two others, under Captain Tatnall, took up a position under Point Hornos, and opened on the town; and the next morning the *Spitfire* and *Vixen* each having two gunboats in tow stood closer in and opened on the town and castle both, and received their fire in return. The vessels received no damage and there were no men killed. This diversion was ordered by Commodore Perry, and was the only bombardment of the castle by our vessels.

The *Spitfire* went the next day to the northward of the city to open communication with the left wing of the besieging army, which rested on the beach there.

Of the six guns landed from the vessels two were taken from the *Potomac* with their crews. Lieutenant A. S. Baldwin and three midshipmen went in command of them. Captain Aulick

who was appointed to command the naval battery on the first day of its firing, ordered that all the passed midshipmen and midshipmen should draw lots to determine who should go with the guns, and it fell to McLane, Jones and myself. The lieutenants also drew lots for the service; of course every one wanted to go. The guns were landed on the 22d, and the one I was assigned to was placed in the *bottom* of a surf-boat instead of being put on skids across the gunwale, so when we got ashore we found great difficulty in getting it out; we finally accomplished it through the bottom of the boat! It was then hauled up on the beach by hundreds of soldiers and we waited for the "trucks," of which there were but two, to take it to the naval battery some three miles distant, and to reach which we had to plough through sand knee-deep, and cross many hills. There was no particular road. Four of the guns were sent off the first day and night, but we remained on the beach with ours. The next day, 23d, Midshipman Jones was sent with the gun-carriages, ammunition and implements, and towards sunset one "truck" came back and Lieutenant Baldwin and Midshipman McLane started with one gun, leaving me to take up the other and last. I tried to keep my men together, but had much trouble with them; missing some of them I went to a sutler's store near by and found them round a cask of ale which they had tapped. I capsized the barrel as the best way to solve the difficulty. Towards midnight another "truck" arrived with two or three hundred "regulars" and their officers, and a number of mules. The sailors slung the gun, the mules were hitched, the soldiers manned the drag-ropes and off we went. I walked with the officers in advance. The batteries kept up a constant fire upon our lines and the bombs occasionally went over our heads, or burst near us. No one was hurt, however, and we kept steadily on. The bombs could be followed with the eye by the burning fuse and presented a grand sight.

The "truck" we were using was nearly worn out, and we broke down several times; but we managed to patch it up

until we got very near General Patterson's headquarters, where the "regulars" were to be relieved by a detachment of volunteers, and here the "truck" broke down entirely. We found, after many attempts to sling the gun for one more effort, that we must make up our minds to wait for the other "truck," which had taken up Baldwin's gun, and must be on its return. One of my best men was a negro: a tall, powerful fellow who performed wonders in getting the gun slung, and helping along generally; he was the life of the party until we got to the battery; but he succumbed at the first gun from the enemy and was of no further use. After breaking down the last time the senior army officer said to me that if I made no objection he would take his men back to their camp as they had had much hard work, and could do nothing by remaining. Of course I made no objection, so I was left with about twenty half drunken sailors who threw themselves on the ground and were soon asleep. I took a seat upon the gun, and confess to feeling lonesome, and to make matters worse a snake ran over my legs, and that was more than I could stand—bomb shells were nothing to it. I knew General Patterson had been informed of my condition, and I made up my mind that if the other "truck" did not come, or if it broke down, I would make my way to the battery with my men. However, towards daybreak I heard the welcome creaking of wheels, and soon after the "truck" appeared with a large detachment of soldiers—my men sprung up refreshed and ready for anything; we slung the gun and were soon underweigh. We forded a small stream near General Patterson's quarters, and here Captain Aulick came out and directed me to come back from the battery as soon as I had gotten my gun mounted, and let him know "how affairs were going on." As I had been up for two nights I was not in the best of humors—indeed, for the first time in my midshipman's career I was insubordinate: so I told the captain that as soon as my gun was mounted we would open fire, and that I would not leave the battery after that! He eyed me keenly for a moment, and a pretty picture I must

have presented after my two days experience in the sand and dirt, and then told me to take his clerk up with me and send the message back by him, and this I did.

Now the naval battery (as it came to be called) was placed by the engineer officers only about seven hundred yards from the walls of Vera Cruz. It was carefully *masked* and all the guns had been taken to it by night; so the Mexicans up to this time had no suspicion of its existence; but my gun being delayed, as I have said, it was broad daylight when we crossed a railroad which ran a short distance from the principal gate. I believe there were never any cars on it. We rushed the gun across the track as rapidly as possible, but the Mexicans, if they did not make out the gun, saw enough to excite their suspicion; and probably sent their engineer officers out to make a more careful examination of the surrounding hills. At all events we got safely to the battery, mounted the gun, and that completed the number. I went to the brow of the hill and looking through the brushwood which served to *mask* the battery saw the city of Vera Cruz stretched at our feet; and just over the city and within easy range the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa with its hundred guns. It was a beautiful scene, and in the early tropical morning everything looked so tranquil and sleepy that it was hard to realize that in a few minutes the silence would be broken by what Napoleon III. called a "fire of hell;" or what our volunteers more forcibly called a "hell of a fire!"

Some distance in the rear of the battery, lying in trenches, was a brigade of volunteers ready to support us in case the enemy attempted to storm our position. The first gun on the right of the battery was the *Raritan's* 32 pounder, Lieutenant Harry Ingersoll; the next the *Potomac's* 32 pounder, Lieutenant A. S. Baldwin; then there was a heavy "traverse," built of sand bags of six or more feet in thickness to prevent a raking fire; then came the *Mississippi's* 64 pounder shell gun, Lieutenant Sidney Smith Lee; next the *St. Mary's* 64 pounder shell gun, Lieutenant C. H. Kennedy; then another "trav-

erse," and finally the *Albany's* 64 pounder shell gun, Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry; and next on the extreme left, the *Potomac's* 32 pounder, Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie.

Captain Mackenzie was Commodore Perry's fleet captain, and we did not know that he was in the battery. Midshipman Jones and I were of the same date and we had some conversation as to which of us would command the *Potomac's* second gun; so when we saw Captain Mackenzie take charge of it we growled a good deal; but there was no help for it, so Jones stayed with the captain, and McLane and I with Baldwin. Captain John H. Aulick of the *Potomac*, being the senior captain in the fleet, was appointed to command the battery on the first day, March 24, 1847, and after that Captains Mayo, Stringham, Forrest and Breese were to command one day each in succession.

The guns were mounted on platforms, on their own carriages. The recoil was checked with sand-bags, and they were run out with the side-tackles and handspikes. Our gun was fired with a match, as we had the lock blown off early in the fight.

I should mention that the battery was constructed entirely of sand-bags. I do not know whether this was the first time that sand-bags were so used, but they answered their purpose so admirably this day that I wonder that any engineer who witnessed the fight should ever have thought of any other fortifications than "earthworks." I am very sorry I cannot give the name of the officer who planned this work. It resisted a very heavy fire for two days, and was not injured to any extent. What damage was done was repaired at night and I suppose we could have held it for an indefinite time.

We were sponging the last gun mounted, and getting the sand out of it, when the battery opposite us opened with a fire so well aimed that it was evident we were discovered. Orders were immediately given to unmask the battery, and it was soon done. The Mexicans had a cross-fire on us from seven forts and now opened on us from them all; and the castle

threw 10-inch bombshells over the city in our midst. For the first five minutes the air seemed to be full of missiles, and it did really look as if it was "no place for the bugler." But our men soon settled down to their work and let them know what American sailors could do with navy guns.

We heard afterwards that when the Mexican engineers picked up some 64-pounder shells which had not exploded and 32-pounder solid shot they said the place must fall.

We fired with great accuracy and after a few hours the enemy's fire commenced to slacken, though it was still heavy. A few minutes after we opened I heard a peculiar "thud," and turning round I saw that a man's head had been taken off by a round-shot at the next gun. I saw Ingersoll wipe the man's brains off his own face with a white handkerchief, and coolly go on with his firing. This was the first man I ever saw killed by a solid shot.

Lieutenant Baldwin happening to say about this time that his gun was not entirely unmasked so that he could see Midshipman McLane and a man named Cavanagh sprang through the embrasure and cleared away the brushwood. For this gallant act they were very properly mentioned by Captain Aulick in his official report.

Our fire was first directed against the batteries, or forts, and afterwards at the walls of the city. Lieutenant Baldwin fired with great coolness and deliberation and soon succeeded in cutting away the flagstaff of the battery opposite us—called by our men the "red" battery, and the most spiteful devil of them all. At this all hands mounted the parapet and gave three cheers. We cut away the walls to the right and left of the forts as cheese is sliced with a knife and soon made a practicable breach, if it had been intended to assault. These breaches were filled up that night with sand-bags and were stronger than ever. This I noticed upon a visit to the town a few days after it had surrendered.

Several amusing scenes came under my observation during the day. Just in the rear of the guns a trench had been dug

for the powder-boys to jump into for shelter. They would run from the magazine, a little farther back, and wait in the trench until the cartridge was wanted. A large shell happening to fall just back of the trench the order was given to lie down. A powder-boy threw himself upon the ground very near the shell, and I saw him eye it anxiously. He then commenced rolling himself towards the trench, and there being a gentle inclination the disturbance of the loose earth caused the shell to roll after him!

Dickens says that Miss La Crevy, the little portrait painter in Nicholas Nickleby, upon hearing of the death of Smike screwed her face, in the effort to prevent crying, into such remarkable contortions that "if she could have transferred it to canvas she would have made her everlasting fortune:" and so it was with that boy's expression if I could but paint it. Finally he rolled into the trench and the shell followed—fortunately not on top of him. No jack-in-a-box ever sprang up with more sprightliness than did that powder monkey! After all the shell did not explode.

Upon another occasion a shell fell in the battery and at the order "down!" a number of us fell on the ground together, with Passed Midshipman Charles M. Fauntleroy underneath. He had a self-cocking revolver in his hand and in the excitement involuntarily fired off two barrels; one of the bullets wounded me slightly in the left knee; and although it only broke the skin, it pained me for some weeks after. Where the bullets went, and why some one was not killed (unless it was because they were midshipmen) is more than I can tell.

Fauntleroy was stationed at the next gun to me: at the end of the day's fight hearing Captain Aulick express a desire to send a dispatch to the beach he volunteered to take it. As the Mexicans were playing upon us with all their guns at this time, we being out of ammunition and unable to reply, it was no joke to go from under the protection of our parapet. He got safely through, however, and he *should* have been specially mentioned for it; but he was not. He served with much dis-

tion in the civil war on the southern side, sometimes in the navy and at others in the army. At one time he was the inspector general of General Jos. E. Johnston's army. A better officer or more chivalric man never trod a quarter deck; and a truer messmate never took his bean soup out of a cigar-box (with a sliding cover to prevent the other reefers from grabbing) as he told me he once did himself. By the way he was the fellow that bought the one-eyed game cock in San Domingo. As we got out of ammunition the embrasures were filled up with sand bags, and the men were directed to lie close in under the parapet and traverses. We were the last gun to expend our ammunition, and Lieutenant Baldwin being wounded, I had the honor of being left in command of it. At the very last fire we double shotted it, which was a rash thing to do as the gun was very much heated and there was danger of its bursting. Indeed Captain Aulick said the gun certainly would burst and ordered me to draw one of the shot; but we had no means to do it; so sending the men out of the way after aiming it, McLane stood on one side of the breech with a match and I on the other, and we fired it. I suppose our idea in doing this was that if the gun *did* burst we would not live to be reprimanded by "old Aulick." After filling up all the embrasures we had nothing to do but to sit under the parapet and await the arrival of our "relief" under Captain Mayo. The Mexicans having returned to their guns, most of which we had previously silenced, sent a storm of shot and shell over our heads and it was rather fun to watch the new fellows coming up, though they probably "did not see it." Our loss this day was four killed; and one officer and five men wounded. I never heard what the loss of the enemy was from our fire.

Upon Captain Mayo assuming the command we were ordered to make the best of our way to the beach, and the *Potomac's* men left in charge of Midshipmen Jones and McLane. I went down in a wagon to take care of Mr. Baldwin who was wounded. We had four wild mules hitched to an army wagon, and as the road was frequently blocked by other wagons, and

one of our mules had his tail shaved off by a cannon shot, it was with much difficulty and danger that we got through. However by 8 p. m. we were all safely on board the old *Potomac*, eating our supper of hard tack and salt junk, and telling the other fellows "all about it." On the next day, 25th, the navy battery continued its good work under the gallant Captain Isaac N. Mayo. The fire from it confirmed the Mexicans in the belief that the town must fall, and on the evening of that day they sent out a flag of truce preparatory to surrendering. Our loss in the battery was Midshipman T. Shubrick of the *Mississippi* and several men killed and a few wounded.

On the 27th commissioners were appointed to arrange the terms of the capitulation, and Captain Aulick represented the navy on the occasion. The fall of Vera Cruz did not necessarily involve that of the castle, for the latter commanded the city. For this reason preparations were being made in the fleet to carry the castle by an escalade in case it held out. For some reason it did not do so, and its commander gave up when the city did. Some said that General Scott would have assaulted the city on the night of the 25th had the flag of truce not come out that afternoon; but I know nothing as to the truth of this report. General Scott probably kept his own counsel. The enemy surrendered five thousand prisoners, and five hundred pieces of artillery of all calibres. Taking everything into consideration they made a brave defence. The loss of life among the soldiers was not great; but I am sorry to say that many women and children were killed. This was not General Scott's fault, as he gave the authorities a chance to send them away which they declined to avail themselves of. When our advance guard entered the town on the 27th to take possession they saw just as they passed through the gate the naked corpse of a woman lying in the middle of the street, placed there for effect, of course. During the bombardment the citizens took refuge in the churches, which was unfortunate for them as the steeples and towers made them conspicuous objects by which, to "lay" the mortars. On the 27th our army

marched in, as I have said, and many of the naval officers were allowed to go on shore to witness the ceremonies. I went in a boat to the mole to be ready to transport our captain to the castle. It seemed to me strange to pull in under the guns of the castle without being fired at. We had been watching it *at a distance* for so many long months that I could not divest myself of a feeling of awe as we approached it. The mole was occupied by the *lazzaroni* who were civil enough while we waited there. After some hours the "advance" arrived, and I took General Patterson and Captain Aulick to the castle of San Juan. I had a good opportunity to examine it, both then and afterwards. I have recorded my opinion as to its strength. It is only that of a young midshipman. When I first visited it, it was certainly the filthiest place I had ever been in; and as for the *smells* the city of Cologne itself could not surpass them.

General Scott's plans for the capture of Vera Cruz and prosecution of the campaign were admirable. As the troops detailed for the garrison of the castle and town marched in to take possession the division of "regulars" under General Twiggs took up the line of march for the city of Mexico. Only twenty-two days after the fall of Vera Cruz Scott defeated the Mexicans at Cerro Gordo, where Santa Anna was strongly posted with an army of twelve thousand men. Captain Joseph E. Johnston of the topographical engineers (the present General Johnston) was badly wounded the day before this battle while reconnoitring, and Midshipman McLane of our ship who was his brother-in-law went up to look out for him; so when he returned he told us much about this fight. The marines of the fleet were on shore with the army during the entire siege and behaved with great gallantry, as indeed they did in all the naval operations of the war. A few days after our occupation of the city I went on shore and visited the forts, &c.—they were badly battered. In the churches the organs, pictures and images were generally knocked to pieces, and men were hard at work glueing on the arms and legs of the

saints. I thought it characteristic of these people to be at this when there were so many suffering people outside to be attended to. I saw many sad sights that day in the way of wounded non-combatants, and was glad to get back to the ship again.

The *Potomac* now went up and anchored near the castle. We sent a number of the captured guns home. I spent many an hour in carrying them to the transports—they were generally very long eighteen pounders, cast of brass or bronze—the metal was very valuable and the original cost of the armament of the castle and city must have been enormous. Some of the guns were very old, and no doubt had a history. All had names and mottoes inscribed on them; one was called “the terror of the North Americans.” Many of these guns are now at the naval academy in Annapolis—to me they recall days of hard work, whatever may be the thoughts of others in viewing them.

CHAPTER X.

EXPEDITION TO ALVARADO—“ALVARADO” HUNTER AND THE STEAMER “SCOURGE”—A COINCIDENCE—AN ALLEGORY—CAPTURE OF TUSPAN—JACK BEARD’S DISAPPOINTMENT—GRAND EXPEDITION TO TOBASCO—ATTACK ON THE GUNBOATS BY THE ENEMY IN AMBUSH—LANDING AT THE DEVIL’S BEND—THE MARCH—INCIDENTS—THE STEAMERS RAISE THE CHEVAUX DE FRISE AND TAKE THE FORT—CAPTURE OF THE TOWN OF TOBASCO—CAPTAIN BIGELOW APPOINTED GOVERNOR—AN UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR—SAIL FOR HOME IN THE FRIGATE “RABITAN”—YELLOW FEVER—ARRIVAL AT NORFOLK.

AFTER the capture of Vera Cruz, in which the Navy had played so conspicuous a part, Commodore Perry determined to take Alvarado, which place it will be remembered had successfully resisted two attempts made on it by the vessels under Commodore Conner. Alvarado, situated near the mouth of the river of the same name, is a small town, thirty-three miles S. E. of Vera Cruz. At this time it was blockaded by the *Scourge*, Lieutenant Commanding Charles G. Hunter. The *Scourge* was a very small steamer, carrying one gun, and a crew of perhaps forty men. She had but lately joined the squadron.

The Commodore made great preparations for this attack, and to make assurance doubly sure a brigade under General Quitman was to march along the beach and co-operate with the vessels.

We accordingly sailed in the *Potomac*, and as the signal was made to the ships to make the best of their way, we, being out of trim and consequently a dull sailer, did not arrive off Alvarado until towards the last. As we approached the bar we saw that something was wrong as the vessels were all underweigh instead of being at anchor. Very soon the *Albany*