

Presidency. General Taylor was nominated in 1848, and was elected. Four years later General Scott received the nomination but was badly beaten, and the party nominating him died with his defeat.\*

\* The Mexican war made three presidential candidates, Scott, Taylor and Pierce—and any number of aspirants for that high office. It made also governors of States, members of the cabinet, foreign ministers and other officers of high rank both in state and nation. The rebellion, which contained more war in a single day, at some critical periods, than the whole Mexican war in two years, has not been so fruitful of political results to those engaged on the Union side. On the other side, the side of the South, nearly every man who holds office of any sort whatever, either in the state or in the nation, was a Confederate soldier; but this is easily accounted for from the fact that the South was a military camp, and there were very few people of a suitable age to be in the army who were not in it.

### CHAPTER XIII.

TREATY OF PEACE—MEXICAN BULL FIGHTS—REGIMENTAL QUARTERMASTER—TRIP TO POPOCATAPETL—TRIP TO THE CAVES OF MEXICO.

THE treaty of peace between the two countries was signed by the commissioners of each side early in February, 1848. It took a considerable time for it to reach Washington, receive the approval of the administration, and be finally ratified by the Senate. It was naturally supposed by the army that there would be no more fighting, and officers and men were of course anxious to get home, but knowing there must be delay they contented themselves as best they could. Every Sunday there was a bull fight for the amusement of those who would pay their fifty cents. I attended one of them—just one—not wishing to leave the country without having witnessed the national sport. The sight to me was sickening. I could not see how human beings could enjoy the sufferings of beasts, and often of men, as they seemed to do on these occasions.

At these sports there are usually from four to six bulls sacrificed. The audience occupies seats around



the ring in which the exhibition is given, each seat but the foremost rising higher than the one in front, so that every one can get a full view of the sport. When all is ready a bull is turned into the ring. Three or four men come in, mounted on the merest skeletons of horses blind or blind-folded and so weak that they could not make a sudden turn with their riders without danger of falling down. The men are armed with spears having a point as sharp as a needle. Other men enter the arena on foot, armed with red flags and explosives about the size of a musket cartridge. To each of these explosives is fastened a barbed needle which serves the purpose of attaching them to the bull by running the needle into the skin. Before the animal is turned loose a lot of these explosives are attached to him. The pain from the pricking of the skin by the needles is exasperating; but when the explosions of the cartridges commence the animal becomes frantic. As he makes a lunge towards one horseman, another runs a spear into him. He turns towards his last tormentor when a man on foot holds out a red flag; the bull rushes for this and is allowed to take it on his horns. The flag drops and covers the eyes of the animal so that he is at a loss what to do; it is jerked from him and the torment is renewed. When the animal is worked into an uncontrollable frenzy, the horsemen withdraw, and the matadores—literally

murderers—enter, armed with knives having blades twelve or eighteen inches long, and sharp. The trick is to dodge an attack from the animal and stab him to the heart as he passes. If these efforts fail the bull is finally lassoed, held fast and killed by driving a knife blade into the spinal column just back of the horns. He is then dragged out by horses or mules, another is let into the ring, and the same performance is renewed.

On the occasion when I was present one of the bulls was not turned aside by the attacks in the rear, the presentations of the red flag, etc., etc., but kept right on, and placing his horns under the flanks of a horse threw him and his rider to the ground with great force. The horse was killed and the rider lay prostrate as if dead. The bull was then lassoed and killed in the manner above described. Men came in and carried the dead man off in a litter. When the slaughtered bull and horse were dragged out, a fresh bull was turned into the ring. Conspicuous among the spectators was the man who had been carried out on a litter but a few minutes before. He was only dead so far as that performance went; but the corpse was so lively that it could not forego the chance of witnessing the discomfiture of some of his brethren who might not be so fortunate. There was a feeling of disgust manifested by the audience to find that he had come to life again. I confess that I felt sorry



to see the cruelty to the bull and the horse. I did not stay for the conclusion of the performance; but while I did stay, there was not a bull killed in the prescribed way.

Bull fights are now prohibited in the Federal District—embracing a territory around the City of Mexico, somewhat larger than the District of Columbia—and they are not an institution in any part of the country. During one of my recent visits to Mexico, bull fights were got up in my honor at Puebla and at Pachuca. I was not notified in advance so as to be able to decline and thus prevent the performance; but in both cases I civilly declined to attend.

Another amusement of the people of Mexico of that day, and one which nearly all indulged in, male and female, old and young, priest and layman, was Monte playing. Regular feast weeks were held every year at what was then known as St. Augustin Tlalpam, eleven miles out of town. There were dealers to suit every class and condition of people. In many of the booths *clackos*—the copper coin of the country, four of them making six and a quarter cents of our money—were piled up in great quantities, with some silver, to accommodate the people who could not bet more than a few pennies at a time. In other booths silver formed the bulk of the capital of the bank, with a few doubloons to be changed

if there should be a run of luck against the bank. In some there was no coin except gold. Here the rich were said to bet away their entire estates in a single day. All this is stopped now.

For myself, I was kept somewhat busy during the winter of 1847–8. My regiment was stationed in Tacubaya. I was regimental quartermaster and commissary. General Scott had been unable to get clothing for the troops from the North. The men were becoming—well, they needed clothing. Material had to be purchased, such as could be obtained, and people employed to make it up into “Yankee uniforms.” A quartermaster in the city was designated to attend to this special duty; but clothing was so much needed that it was seized as fast as made up. A regiment was glad to get a dozen suits at a time. I had to look after this matter for the 4th infantry. Then our regimental fund had run down and some of the musicians in the band had been without their extra pay for a number of months.

The regimental bands at that day were kept up partly by pay from the government, and partly by pay from the regimental fund. There was authority of law for enlisting a certain number of men as musicians. So many could receive the pay of non-commissioned officers of the various grades, and the remainder the pay of privates. This would not secure a band leader, nor good players on certain in-



struments. In garrison there are various ways of keeping up a regimental fund sufficient to give extra pay to musicians, establish libraries and ten-pin alleys, subscribe to magazines and furnish many extra comforts to the men. The best device for supplying the fund is to issue bread to the soldiers instead of flour. The ration used to be eighteen ounces per day of either flour or bread; and one hundred pounds of flour will make one hundred and forty pounds of bread. This saving was purchased by the commissary for the benefit of the fund. In the emergency the 4th infantry was laboring under, I rented a bakery in the city, hired bakers—Mexicans—bought fuel and whatever was necessary, and I also got a contract from the chief commissary of the army for baking a large amount of hard bread. In two months I made more money for the fund than my pay amounted to during the entire war. While stationed at Monterey I had relieved the post fund in the same way. There, however, was no profit except in the saving of flour by converting it into bread.

In the spring of 1848 a party of officers obtained leave to visit Popocatepetl, the highest volcano in America, and to take an escort. I went with the party, many of whom afterwards occupied conspicuous positions before the country. Of those who "went south," and attained high rank, there was Lieutenant Richard Anderson, who commanded a

corps at Spottsylvania; Captain Sibley, a major-general, and, after the war, for a number of years in the employ of the Khédive of Egypt; Captain George Crittenden, a rebel general; S. B. Buckner, who surrendered Fort Donelson; and Mansfield Lovell, who commanded at New Orleans before that city fell into the hands of the National troops. Of those who remained on our side there were Captain Andrew Porter, Lieutenant C. P. Stone and Lieutenant Z. B. Tower. There were quite a number of other officers, whose names I cannot recollect.

At a little village (Ozumba) near the base of Popocatepetl, where we purposed to commence the ascent, we procured guides and two pack mules with forage for our horses. High up on the mountain there was a deserted house of one room, called the Vaqueria, which had been occupied years before by men in charge of cattle ranging on the mountain. The pasturage up there was very fine when we saw it, and there were still some cattle, descendants of the former domestic herd, which had now become wild. It was possible to go on horseback as far as the Vaqueria, though the road was somewhat hazardous in places. Sometimes it was very narrow with a yawning precipice on one side, hundreds of feet down to a roaring mountain torrent below, and almost perpendicular walls on the other side. At one of these places one of our mules loaded with two



sacks of barley, one on each side, the two about as big as he was, struck his load against the mountain-side and was precipitated to the bottom. The descent was steep but not perpendicular. The mule rolled over and over until the bottom was reached, and we supposed of course the poor animal was dashed to pieces. What was our surprise, not long after we had gone into bivouac, to see the lost mule, cargo and owner coming up the ascent. The load had protected the animal from serious injury; and his owner had gone after him and found a way back to the path leading up to the hut where we were to stay.

The night at the Vaqueria was one of the most unpleasant I ever knew. It was very cold and the rain fell in torrents. A little higher up the rain ceased and snow began. The wind blew with great velocity. The log-cabin we were in had lost the roof entirely on one side, and on the other it was hardly better than a sieve. There was little or no sleep that night. As soon as it was light the next morning, we started to make the ascent to the summit. The wind continued to blow with violence and the weather was still cloudy, but there was neither rain nor snow. The clouds, however, concealed from our view the country below us, except at times a momentary glimpse could be got through a clear space between them. The wind carried the loose snow

around the mountain-sides in such volumes as to make it almost impossible to stand up against it. We labored on and on, until it became evident that the top could not be reached before night, if at all in such a storm, and we concluded to return. The descent was easy and rapid, though dangerous, until we got below the snow line. At the cabin we mounted our horses, and by night were at Ozumba.

The fatigues of the day and the loss of sleep the night before drove us to bed early. Our beds consisted of a place on the dirt-floor with a blanket under us. Soon all were asleep; but long before morning first one and then another of our party began to cry out with excruciating pain in the eyes. Not one escaped it. By morning the eyes of half the party were so swollen that they were entirely closed. The others suffered pain equally. The feeling was about what might be expected from the prick of a sharp needle at a white heat. We remained in quarters until the afternoon bathing our eyes in cold water. This relieved us very much, and before night the pain had entirely left. The swelling, however, continued, and about half the party still had their eyes entirely closed; but we concluded to make a start back, those who could see a little leading the horses of those who could not see at all. We moved back to the village of Ameca Ameca, some six miles, and stopped again for the night. The next morning all were entirely



well and free from pain. The weather was clear and Popocatepetl stood out in all its beauty, the top looking as if not a mile away, and inviting us to return. About half the party were anxious to try the ascent again, and concluded to do so. The remainder—I was with the remainder—concluded that we had got all the pleasure there was to be had out of mountain climbing, and that we would visit the great caves of Mexico, some ninety miles from where we then were, on the road to Acapulco.

The party that ascended the mountain the second time succeeded in reaching the crater at the top, with but little of the labor they encountered in their first attempt. Three of them—Anderson, Stone and Buckner—wrote accounts of their journey, which were published at the time. I made no notes of this excursion, and have read nothing about it since, but it seems to me that I can see the whole of it as vividly as if it were but yesterday. I have been back at Ameca Ameca, and the village beyond, twice in the last five years. The scene had not changed materially from my recollection of it.

The party which I was with moved south down the valley to the town of Cuantla, some forty miles from Ameca Ameca. The latter stands on the plain at the foot of Popocatepetl, at an elevation of about eight thousand feet above tide water. The slope down is gradual as the traveller moves south, but

one would not judge that, in going to Cuantla, descent enough had been made to occasion a material change in the climate and productions of the soil; but such is the case. In the morning we left a temperate climate where the cereals and fruits are those common to the United States; we halted in the evening in a tropical climate where the orange and banana, the coffee and the sugar-cane were flourishing. We had been travelling, apparently, on a plain all day, but in the direction of the flow of water.

Soon after the capture of the City of Mexico an armistice had been agreed to, designating the limits beyond which troops of the respective armies were not to go during its continuance. Our party knew nothing about these limits. As we approached Cuantla bugles sounded the assembly, and soldiers rushed from the guard-house in the edge of the town towards us. Our party halted, and I tied a white pocket handkerchief to a stick and, using it as a flag of truce, proceeded on to the town. Captains Sibley and Porter followed a few hundred yards behind. I was detained at the guard-house until a messenger could be dispatched to the quarters of the commanding general, who authorized that I should be conducted to him. I had been with the general but a few minutes when the two officers following announced themselves. The Mexican general reminded us that it was a violation of the truce for us



to be there. However, as we had no special authority from our own commanding general, and as we knew nothing about the terms of the truce, we were permitted to occupy a vacant house outside the guard for the night, with the promise of a guide to put us on the road to Cuernavaca the next morning.

Cuernavaca is a town west of Cuantla. The country through which we passed, between these two towns, is tropical in climate and productions and rich in scenery. At one point, about half-way between the two places, the road goes over a low pass in the mountains in which there is a very quaint old town, the inhabitants of which at that day were nearly all full-blooded Indians. Very few of them even spoke Spanish. The houses were built of stone and generally only one story high. The streets were narrow, and had probably been paved before Cortez visited the country. They had not been graded, but the paving had been done on the natural surface. We had with us one vehicle, a cart, which was probably the first wheeled vehicle that had ever passed through that town.

On a hill overlooking this town stands the tomb of an ancient king; and it was understood that the inhabitants venerated this tomb very highly, as well as the memory of the ruler who was supposed to be buried in it. We ascended the mountain and surveyed the tomb; but it showed no particular

marks of architectural taste, mechanical skill or advanced civilization. The next day we went into Cuernavaca.

After a day's rest at Cuernavaca our party set out again on the journey to the great caves of Mexico. We had proceeded but a few miles when we were stopped, as before, by a guard and notified that the terms of the existing armistice did not permit us to go further in that direction. Upon convincing the guard that we were a mere party of pleasure seekers desirous of visiting the great natural curiosities of the country which we expected soon to leave, we were conducted to a large hacienda near by, and directed to remain there until the commanding general of that department could be communicated with and his decision obtained as to whether we should be permitted to pursue our journey. The guard promised to send a messenger at once, and expected a reply by night. At night there was no response from the commanding general, but the captain of the guard was sure he would have a reply by morning. Again in the morning there was no reply. The second evening the same thing happened, and finally we learned that the guard had sent no message or messenger to the department commander. We determined therefore to go on unless stopped by a force sufficient to compel obedience.

After a few hours' travel we came to a town where



a scene similar to the one at Cuantla occurred. The commanding officer sent a guide to conduct our party around the village and to put us upon our road again. This was the last interruption: that night we rested at a large coffee plantation, some eight miles from the cave we were on the way to visit. It must have been a Saturday night; the peons had been paid off, and spent part of the night in gambling away their scanty week's earnings. Their coin was principally copper, and I do not believe there was a man among them who had received as much as twenty-five cents in money. They were as much excited, however, as if they had been staking thousands. I recollect one poor fellow, who had lost his last clacko, pulled off his shirt and, in the most excited manner, put that up on the turn of a card. Monte was the game played, the place out of doors, near the window of the room occupied by the officers of our party.

The next morning we were at the mouth of the cave at an early hour, provided with guides, candles and rockets. We explored to a distance of about three miles from the entrance, and found a succession of chambers of great dimensions and of great beauty when lit up with our rockets. Stalactites and stalagmites of all sizes were discovered. Some of the former were many feet in diameter and extended from ceiling to floor; some of the latter

were but a few feet high from the floor; but the formation is going on constantly, and many centuries hence these stalagmites will extend to the ceiling and become complete columns. The stalagmites were all a little concave, and the cavities were filled with water. The water percolates through the roof, a drop at a time—often the drops several minutes apart—and more or less charged with mineral matter. Evaporation goes on slowly, leaving the mineral behind. This in time makes the immense columns, many of them thousands of tons in weight, which serve to support the roofs over the vast chambers. I recollect that at one point in the cave one of these columns is of such huge proportions that there is only a narrow passage left on either side of it. Some of our party became satisfied with their explorations before we had reached the point to which the guides were accustomed to take explorers, and started back without guides. Coming to the large column spoken of, they followed it entirely around, and commenced retracing their steps into the bowels of the mountain, without being aware of the fact. When the rest of us had completed our explorations, we started out with our guides, but had not gone far before we saw the torches of an approaching party. We could not conceive who these could be, for all of us had come in together, and there were none but ourselves at the entrance when



we started in. Very soon we found it was our friends. It took them some time to conceive how they had got where they were. They were sure they had kept straight on for the mouth of the cave, and had gone about far enough to have reached it.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

RETURN OF THE ARMY—MARRIAGE—ORDERED TO THE  
PACIFIC COAST—CROSSING THE ISTHMUS—ARRIVAL  
AT SAN FRANCISCO.

MY experience in the Mexican war was of great advantage to me afterwards. Besides the many practical lessons it taught, the war brought nearly all the officers of the regular army together so as to make them personally acquainted. It also brought them in contact with volunteers, many of whom served in the war of the rebellion afterwards. Then, in my particular case, I had been at West Point at about the right time to meet most of the graduates who were of a suitable age at the breaking out of the rebellion to be trusted with large commands. Graduating in 1843, I was at the military academy from one to four years with all cadets who graduated between 1840 and 1846—seven classes. These classes embraced more than fifty officers who afterwards became generals on one side or the other in the rebellion, many of them holding high commands. All the older officers, who became conspicuous in the rebellion, I had also served with and known in Mex-