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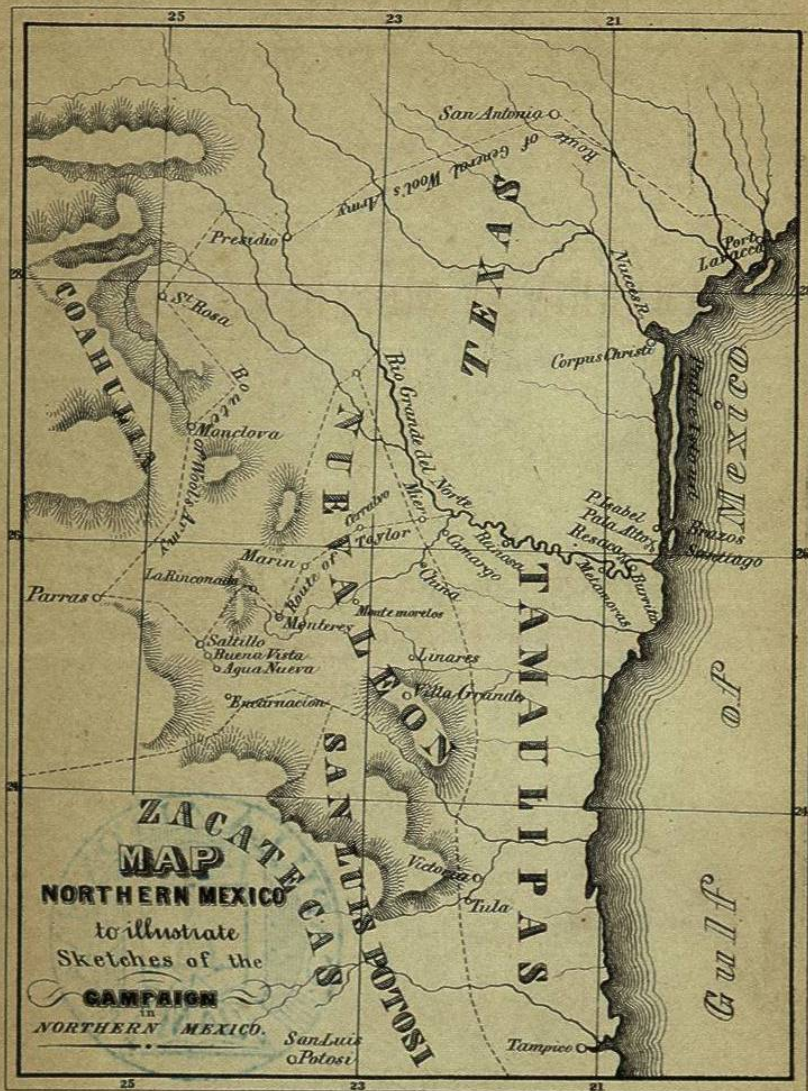
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SKETCHES

OF THE

CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN MEXICO.

IN

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-SIX AND SEVEN.

BY AN OFFICER

OF THE FIRST REGIMENT OF OHIO VOLUNTEERS.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY  
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TO THE  
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OF  
THE FIRST OHIO VOLUNTEERS,  
THIS VOLUME

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## INTRODUCTION.

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IF the time has not yet come for the grave and impartial summing up by the historian, of that interesting event—the *Mexican war*—it is believed that a sufficiently remote period has arrived for the publication of those Notes and Memoirs which have been prepared, and are designed, not so much to gratify any existing popular interest, as to “serve the cause of History.” The writer of the following pages is aware that his subject lacks the charm of novelty. A strong and experienced corps of intelligent officers and literary camp-followers, armed *cap-a-pie* for the campaign, have taken the field before him. Still, as the same landscape or picture, when observed from different points of view, will not unseldom present new and attractive features; the reader may perhaps discover in these Sketches, some lights and shadows to which his attention has not heretofore been directed. The history of the First Regiment of Ohio volunteers (incorporated with the narrative) may be interesting to many of his fellow-citizens; and his account of some of the leading events of the war, he trusts, will not be altogether valueless.

An untrained volunteer in authorship as in arms, the writer—though not indifferent to, nor ungrateful for the approbation of others,—has been more intent upon the performance of his duty, than solicitous for the favorable opinion of his readers. Prompted by a just State pride, and the desire to discharge a merited tribute to the constancy and courage of the gallant men to whom the volume is inscribed, he has endeavored to recite plainly and briefly those inter-



esting events in which the troops of Ohio participated, together with such incidents of Taylor's campaign as seemed necessary to afford the general reader a clear, connected, and comprehensive view of the war in Northern Mexico. He has quoted only such *Orders*, *Dispatches* and official documents as were required to elucidate the narrative; the interest of which he has sought to enhance by occasional extracts from the only history of the war as yet published by Mexicans. To his surviving fellow-soldiers, who are all doubtless content (for the true soldier is never covetous of praise,) with the meager account of their services moldering in the archives of the War-Department, these chapters may serve to recall many scenes which time, perhaps, has already partially effaced from the tablet of memory. An eye-witness of what he describes, the writer confidently claims for it the belief of the reader; for though his little book be but a trifling contribution to the history of the war, it is one of *facts*,—collected from notes taken almost daily during the campaign.

It has been no part of his purpose to discuss in these pages the question of "*the origin of the war.*" Concerning that, our politicians have scarcely yet ceased to pass resolutions and make speeches. The mists of passion and prejudice still hang like the smoke wreaths of battle over the unfortunate controversy. Time will soon dissipate them, and the impartial pen of some future historian will treat the subject in a manner which its magnitude and interest and justice to both nations require.

However the final decision of the grave question of its *causes* may affect the character of our government, all will agree that its *prosecution* and *results* redound greatly to the credit and permanent benefit of the United States. For, to judge it fairly,—as a military transaction,—the numbers and positions of the forces actually

engaged in the field must be regarded, rather than the power and resources of the belligerent countries.

As in all wars, we are compelled to lament among its consequences, the desolation of many hearts and homes; but it has also extended the blessings of knowledge and of civil and religious liberty to thousands; it has brought to us States, rivers and harbors, the possession of which was alone necessary for our political and commercial pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. More than this,—it has solved the problem of this country's strength; and proved to European Powers, what they had previously denied, that the volunteer armies of the United States were competent to carry on extended and offensive operations and to conduct great wars to a successful issue. These are among its fruits; and it is believed that,—beside the immense accession to our territory and commerce,—the military reputation resulting from it will tend, under Providence, to aid enlightened statesmen in averting greater bloodshed hereafter.

On this subject it will be sufficient to quote, in conclusion, a few lines from the admirable dispatch of our late distinguished Secretary of State (Mr. Everett) to the British and French governments on the subject of the proposed tripartite treaty for the protection of Cuba. In alluding to the great march of events on this continent, he thus speaks of the splendid results of the Mexican war:—

"Without adverting to the difference of opinion which arose in reference to this war,—as must always happen in free countries in reference to great measures,—no person, surveying these events with the eye of a comprehensive statesman, can fail to trace in the main result, the undoubted operation of the law of our political existence. The consequences are before the world. Vast provinces, which had languished for three centuries under the



leaden sway of a stationary system, are coming under the influences of an active civilization. Freedom of speech and the press, the trial by jury, religious equality and representative government, have been carried by the Constitution of the United States into extensive regions in which they were unknown before. By the settlement of California the great circuit of intelligence round the globe is completed. Every addition to the territory of the American Union has given homes to European destitution and gardens to European want. From every part of the United Kingdom, from France, from Switzerland and Germany, and from the extremest north of Europe, a march of immigration has been taken up, such as the world has never seen before. Into the United States, grown to their present extent in the manner described, but little less than half a million of the population of the Old World is annually pouring; to be immediately incorporated into an industrious and prosperous community, in the bosom of which they find political and religious liberty, social position, employment and bread."

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## ERRATUM.

On page 273, line 22, read "skirting the road."

## SKETCHES

OF THE

## CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN MEXICO.

## CHAPTER I.

THE Annexation of Texas—Our Army encamps opposite Matamoros—The Mexican Troops cross the Rio Grande and commence hostilities—General Taylor calls for reinforcements—The War recognized by the Congress and people of the United States—Requisition upon Ohio for three Regiments of Volunteers—They are immediately raised and rendezvous at Camp Washington—Organization of the Ohio Brigade—Embarkation of the First Regiment—The Fourth of July—General Hamer's speech.

At the commencement of President Polk's Administration, our country was involved in two very serious disputes with foreign powers: one with England, the other with Mexico; the subject of the former, the boundary of Oregon; of the latter, that of Texas. Although "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" had been the *shibboleth* of the government party in the national election just passed, the Cabinet at Washington did not seem to think it altogether politic to prosecute both of these quarrels with arms. The Oregon question was, therefore, unraveled by negotiation; that of Texas, cut with the sword. Whether the latter could also have been peaceably adjusted, is one of the questions connected with the origin of