

protects the inner walls from the sun, is itself generally sheltered by the overhanging branches of fruit trees and rare flowering vines, that breathe a delicious fragrance through its cool arches. These colonnades, as we afterward discovered when stationed in the city, were just the places in which to enjoy a siesta or a bottle of *vinto tino* and cigar, after a fatiguing drill in the *Plaza mayor*.

After visiting the churches and other public buildings, which presented nothing remarkable either in design or embellishment, we entered a restaurant, where a very poor dinner was obtainable for sixteen rials, including the luxury of a table-cloth. The Mexicans are much more temperate than the Americans, both in eating and drinking; and their cafes consequently are not as flourishing as those in our towns and villages. Their favorite beverages now, as at the princely feasts of the Aztec nobles in the days of their barbaric splendor, are the pulque, distilled from the aloe, and the chocolate, prepared from the cacao. A very good red wine is grown in parts of the *tierra templada*, the quality of which might be much improved by the careful and cleanly process of manufacture pursued in our Ohio vineyards.

Nearly all the shops of Monterey were open, and some of them contained assortments of rare and valuable goods, particularly of Chinese fabrics. The market also seemed to be well attended by the country people. Relying on the friendly assurance contained in the proclamation of the military governor of the city, the citizens had gradually returned to their homes. But they evidently avoided any familiar intercourse with the Americans. Naturally taciturn and serious, the

countenances of the better classes seemed to be yet more darkened with scowls of mingled hatred and sadness; doubtless attributable to wounded pride and disappointed hopes. I do not recollect ever to have heard a hearty laugh from Mexican lips; and rarely indeed could they be induced to smile, "though Nestor swear the jest be laughable." The miserable leperos, however, who bask in the sunny plazas and hang around the huts of the suburbs, appeared perfectly indifferent to the fortunes of the city and even to their own fate. No spark of true patriotism, religion, or virtue, ever warmed their hearts. They seem incapable of the least intellectual effort; and in their present ignorance and wretchedness, no proof of the influence of Christianity and civilization in purifying and elevating the Indian race, can be recognized. The Indians of Mexico, comprising, it is said, at least two-thirds of its population, seem to have exchanged the rude virtues of their warlike ancestors for the vices of their conquerors. Ages of slavery under Spanish masters, commencing with the *repartimiento* system, so justly denounced at its inception by the renowned Las Casas,* have rendered them incapable of appreciating or enjoying liberty; even as the fish, long confined in the dark lakes of the Mam-

* Fray Bartolome de la Casas, bishop of Chiapa, was born at Seville, in 1474; and was the first person admitted to priest's orders in the New World. A benevolent missionary and devoted friend of the aborigines, he was honored with the title of "Protector-General of the Indians." He was the first to propose, as the means of ameliorating the condition of the conquered natives of Cuba, that negro slaves should be introduced into that island. It would seem then, that the most enlarged philanthropy of the 16th, as of the 19th century, extended to but one favorite color. In the former the *black* was enslaved for the benefit of the *red* race; and now the meek Chinaman is being substituted for the African.

moth Cave, have lost the organs of vision from the absence of light.

On the way to camp, after the visit to Monterey just mentioned, I rode over the battle-field, and was shocked to perceive that the dogs and wolves had opened many of the shallow graves. The glacis, thrown across the gorge of the Teneria after its capture, and in which many of the enemy had been buried, was a promiscuous mass of bones and rags. The remains of our own soldiers were afterward more carefully interred. The officers who fell in the battle, were buried together in a little cemetery on the border of the wood of San Domingo, over which a cross was erected in the hope that it would protect the hallowed spot from desecration. Many Mexicans have as little regard for the sanctity of the grave of an heretical Yankee, as the hyena itself; and there have been instances in which dying foreigners have been compelled to profess the Catholic religion in order to secure even the privilege of burial.

Among the gallant officers whom death released from the service in the autumn of 1846, were Captain Randolph Ridgely, of the Artillery, and Brigadier General Thomas L. Hamer. The former possessed one of those dauntless spirits that revel in danger as if it were their natural element; and by his conspicuous courage and skill in battle had already gained a brilliant reputation. After the death of Major Ringgold at Palo Alto, he had succeeded to the command of the "Flying Artillery,"—a post for which he was eminently fitted. In battle, he seemed to bear a charmed life; but though shielded in the midst of so many perils, it was not

proof against the accidents of fortune. He was the most accomplished horseman in the army, and yet by one of those inscrutable and most unexpected dispensations of Providence, met death by the slipping of his horse while riding in the streets of Monterey.

General Hamer, commander of our brigade, died in camp at San Domingo, on the night of the 2d of December, after a very brief illness. The writer, who became acquainted with him at the commencement of the war, and enjoyed much of his society during the campaign, is conscious that his rude and unpracticed pen can not portray his character, or render more than a feeble tribute to his many excellent qualities of head and heart. Never was a general more beloved by his troops; and indeed, his frank and popular manners gained him friends in every society in which he was thrown. Throughout his sickness, his tent was besieged by the men with sorrowful faces and anxious inquiries. The devotion of his own brigade was evinced in one of those sad scenes, which I was often called to witness,—the death of a soldier. Early in the night of General Hamer's decease, private Collins of our regiment breathed his last; and with his dying words expressed the most affectionate interest for his General. A few hours afterward that loved superior suddenly expired, in the presence of his physician, Dr. Caldwell, and a few officers of the brigade, exhibiting in his last moments his usual serenity and fortitude:

"—— So calm his exit!
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

The whole camp, from the commander-in-chief down to the

roughest soldier in the ranks, esteemed him and lamented his death.* General Hamer was well known as an able lawyer, and the most popular and eloquent orator of the Democratic party in Ohio. The complexion of his politics was not, perhaps, quite *red* enough to suit his party in the times in which he lived; yet was he universally esteemed as a true patriot and a sound statesman. He had represented his district in the councils of the nation, where his excellency of speech and wisdom commanded the admiration and confidence of his peers. But lately re-elected to Congress, and with a brilliant position in the army, a dazzling career of

* When General Taylor was informed of Hamer's death, he exclaimed, "I have lost the balance-wheel of my volunteer army!" The following communications manifest to some extent, the regard entertained for the deceased General at headquarters:

*Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation,
Camp near Monterey, December 3, 1846.*

"Sir: It becomes my melancholy duty to report the death of Brigadier General Hamer, of the volunteer service, who expired last evening, after a short illness. The order to the army announcing this sudden dispensation, expresses but feebly the high estimation in which the deceased was held by all who knew him. In council, I found him clear and judicious; and in the administration of his command, though kind, yet always impartial and just. He was an active participant in the operations before Monterey, and since had commanded the volunteer division. His loss to the army at this time can not be supplied, and the experience which he daily acquired in a new profession rendered his services continually more valuable. I had looked forward with confidence to the benefit of his abilities and judgment in the service which yet lies before us, and feel most sensibly the privation of them

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR, Major General U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C."

Orders }
No. 150. }

*Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation,
Camp near Monterey, December 3, 1846.*

"With feelings of profound sorrow, the commanding general announces to the troops the decease of Brigadier General T. L. Hamer, of the volunteer service, who expired last evening, after a short but violent illness. The ability and judgment displayed by the deceased general in the exercise of his military command, and the sterling qualities which marked his private character, endeared him justly to the

earthly honors was opening before him, and had he lived, he would probably have "touched the highest point of mortal greatness." His manners were natural, graceful and winning; his person robust and manly; and his features, though not handsome, exceedingly prepossessing and intellectual. He was one of those men, whose souls appear to be ever beaming through their faces. His conversation was cheerful and interesting, and the wit and anecdote with which he pointed and adorned it, was always brilliant and charming. It has never been my fortune to know one who understood better than Hamer, when and how to use "the word fitly spoken," which, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." His cool head, ripe judgment, enlightened spirit and comprehensive genius would have made him eminent in any position. During the campaign he had shown a practical good sense and talent for military affairs, not often displayed by those suddenly elevated by political influence from civil life to high rank in the army.

The funeral ceremonies on the 4th of December were solemn and touching, and there were not many dry eyes at

army and to his many personal friends. By the army in the field, and by the citizens of his own state, his loss will be severely felt; to those connected with him by closer ties it will be irreparable. The deceased will be interred at 10 o'clock, A. M., to-morrow, with the honors due to his rank. Brigadier General Quitman, commanding the volunteer division, will conduct the funeral ceremonies, and will command the escort, to be composed of one regiment of volunteer infantry, one company of cavalry, and two pieces of artillery. The cavalry and artillery of the escort will be designated by Brigadier General Twiggs from his division, and will report to General Quitman at 9 o'clock to-morrow.

"All officers off duty are respectfully invited to attend the funeral, from the headquarters of the Ohio and Kentucky brigade.

"By order of Major General TAYLOR:

W. W. S. BLISS,
Assistant Adjutant General."

the grave. The remains of the venerated General were subsequently conveyed,—in accordance with a resolution of the Legislature of Ohio,—to his former home in Brown county, where a vast concourse of his old friends and neighbors united in his final obsequies. His name and fame will never be forgotten by the brave and patriotic people of the great State he served and honored. So long as purity of purpose, wisdom, eloquence and courage are esteemed, they will treasure his memory in affectionate remembrance. I trust the day is not far distant, when Ohio (emulating the generous example of her sister States) will testify her appreciation of such services and sacrifices by rearing a monument in honor of her own lamented dead; and inscribe high upon its marble muster-roll the deathless name of "Hamer,"—statesman and soldier,—*in utroque fidelis*.

Before concluding this chapter, I desire to review briefly the military movements of the autumn: And first, those of the Mexican forces. We have seen that the army of General Ampudia after the battle of Monterey, had retreated not only beyond the line agreed upon by the convention of September 24th; but to the city of San Luis de Potosi, situated hundreds of miles in the interior. The pass of the *Rinconada* or *Los Muertos*, is the gate to the broad table-lands of Northern Mexico. It is two marches from Monterey and is the strongest natural position for defense I ever saw, or read of, save Thermopylæ. Nature scarcely needed the assistance of art in defending the pass; yet on the brow of the mountain and commanding the narrow and steep ascent, strong intrenchments had been thrown up, and preparations made for a

serious resistance. By its abandonment, the State of Coahuila, with its rich capital, Saltillo, was left open to our arms.

A month later, on the 27th of October, the garrison of Tampico under General Parrodi, after dismantling their batteries and throwing their heavy guns into the sea, also retreated to San Luis through the pass of Tula. The people of the frontier States of Mexico witnessed these movements with surprise and alarm; and complained loudly of the central government for having thus left them to the tender mercies of the enemy. But these dispositions attest the sagacity and military talent of General Santa Anna, who having recently been restored to power, had entered the bloody arena as proudly and boldly as one of his own favorite game-cocks. He foresaw the impossibility of making head against the American arms, with even the preponderant force his country had heretofore set in the field. To prevent the Mexican divisions from being beaten in detail, he wisely determined to concentrate the entire military strength of the Republic; and then by one heavy and sudden blow upon a weak point of his adversary, restore the *morale* of his troops and the sinking fortunes of his country. The point too (San Luis de Potosi) which he had selected for the re-organization of his grand army, being nearly equi-distant from all parts of our widely extended line, favored his designs; and at the same time would enable him to meet promptly invasions from any quarter or *pronunciamientos* at the capital. Keeping a strong division of Infantry and Lancers in observations at Tula, and throwing his numerous Cavalry forward on the

road to Saltillo, he remained quietly at San Luis until the 28th of January, 1847; during which time many and exaggerated accounts of his forces and designs reached our camp. There were some among us, who saw in every fire that blazed upon the mountains, the signal for an insurrection; and who magnified every plump of partisan Lancers seen in the valley, into the van-guard of an approaching army. But General Taylor, from his time-worn tent at San Domingo, calmly watched the gathering storm; and when told that Santa Anna would finally advance with thirty thousand men of all arms, is said to have replied, "In that event, I shall want ten thousand."

Let us now examine the position and strength of the American forces at this period. It will be remembered that at the commencement of hostilities, our government determined to invade Mexico with three columns. The first or "Army of the West" under General Kearney, marching from the frontier of Missouri across the Indian territory, was ordered to conquer the State of New Mexico; and, with the co-operation of our Pacific fleet, the State of Alta California. This column performed the task assigned it before the close of the year 1846. Those distant departments of Mexico were virtually annexed to the United States, and supplied with constitutions of the most approved pattern, and laws of the latest fashion. It must be confessed that the establishment of these civil governments, was not calculated to convince the world, that the object of the Cabinet at Washington was different from that which had been previously disclosed with such amiable *naviete* by our minister to

Mexico, a plain-spoken Buckeye, who had not studied diplomacy in the schools of Metternich and Talleyrand.

The second column, or "Army of the Center," under General Wool, marched about the same time from San Antonio, Texas, in the direction of the enemy's State of Chihuahua, with orders to capture and hold it subject to a definitive treaty of peace. General Wool, finding no practicable route to Chihuahua, except one by way of the towns Monclova and Parras, which brought him within a few leagues of Saltillo, was fortunately ordered by General Taylor to abandon his original purpose, and await further orders at Parras. Though this expedition had thus been defeated in its object, the long and weary march of Wool's command had been favorable to the training of the volunteers composing it; and who soon afterward exhibited their discipline and constancy on the field of Buena Vista.

With the progress and condition of the third column or "Army of Occupation," as it continued to be designated, the reader is already familiar. He has seen it dislodge the enemy from Monterey, and then quietly encamp in and around the city, to await the progress of diplomacy during the armistice. Our government had sent to that of Mexico a proposition to open negotiations for peace immediately after the return of Santa Anna from exile; and had been briefly informed, in reply, that the question would be laid before the new Mexican Congress, which was to assemble in December. Now if that Congress should consent to treat for a termination of the existing war, and a peace upon the basis of the *uti possidetis* should be established, it was

clearly desirable that we should be found in possession of the the whole country north of the Sierra Madre. And if the Mexican Congress should refuse, as it did, to enter into negotiations, the possession of Tampico and the establishment of a new basis of operations on the East would facilitate the conquest of a peace. Our Cabinet therefore very wisely determined to prosecute the war in the interval that must elapse before the assembling of the Mexican Congress, with the utmost vigor, and issued orders for a combined attack upon Tampico by land and sea. The movement was arrested by the news of the capitulation of Monterey, at the date of which General Taylor was not apprized of the changes that had occurred in the views of his government. The enemy, however, as we have seen, hastened to abandon the threatened port, Tampico, and it was soon afterward occupied by the naval force under Commodore Perry.

On the 3d of November, General Taylor was instructed by his government to terminate the armistice. All the hopes of peace which he had reasonably entertained were dissipated. On the 6th of November, he sent Major Graham to notify the Mexican general-in-chief, that the temporary suspension of arms would cease on the 13th, the date at which the notice was expected to reach San Luis de Potosi. Major Graham proceeded no further than Saltillo, whence his dispatches were forwarded to Santa Anna by the governor of Coahuila. The Mexican general in his acknowledgment of their arrival, thoughtlessly or maliciously insinuated that the notice was not warranted by the terms of the convention of Monterey; but added that Taylor might commence hos-

tilities when he pleased, and that he would duly correspond to them. This note met General Taylor at Saltillo, which city he had entered without opposition on the 16th of November, at the head of Worth's division. He at once, in a second communication, vindicated his government from the imputation of a want of faith, and concluded by expressing the hope that the august Mexican Congress would find it for the interest and honor of the nation, to enter upon an amicable negotiation for the settlement of existing difficulties. General Santa Anna, in reply, courteously submitted to General Taylor's better judgment of the armistice; but assured the American General, that neither the Congress *nor any Mexican* (the words in italics were probably intended to clear his own garments from the smell of treason) could ever listen to any proposition for peace, until the forces of the United States had withdrawn from the national territory.

General Taylor leaving Worth and twelve hundred regular troops at Saltillo, now our advance post, with Wool at the head of twenty-four hundred men, on his flank at Parras, returned to Monterey and prepared next to occupy Victoria, the capital of Tamaulipas. That city was not only an important point, politically, but being situated at the debouchee of the Tula pass, a strong force there would threaten the flank of the Mexican army should it attempt to advance upon Saltillo. Accordingly on the 13th of December, the commander-in-chief, having previously ordered Patterson's division which had been left in reserve upon the Rio Grande, to meet him at Victoria, marched eastward with the brigades of

Twiggs and Quitman, leaving General Butler in command at Monterey, with a small battalion of Regulars, the 4th Infantry, in the city, and our brigade still in camp at San Domingo.

CHAPTER VIII.

FALSE reports.—Why and how we went to Saltillo.—The loan of a donkey.—Forced march across the Sierra Madre.—Mountain scenery.—La Rinconada.—The aloe plant.—Los Muertos.—The *tierra templada*.—Bivouac at the Palomas pass.—Conduct of the natives.—A cotton factory.—Scarcity of fuel.—Sufferings of the troops.—Rabbit hunts.—A visit to Saltillo.—Christmas-eve.—Another stampede.—Christmas-day in Saltillo.—Lassoing a team.—Return to Monterey.

THE reader who traces on the map of Mexico, the long line occupied by our troops in the winter of 1846, in distant and small detachments, and then looks at the position of the united Mexican forces at San Luis de Potosi, might perhaps suppose that General Taylor had committed a palpable fault in so dividing his army as to prevent its timely concentration at any threatened point. But when he is informed that there are no practicable passes through the rocky barrier of the Sierra Madre, save at Tula and Rinconada, and that it is impossible to transport artillery through the former; that between San Luis and Saltillo, there is a vast desert, which is of all natural obstacles the most difficult for an army to overcome; he will perceive how the rules of war are governed by the country in which it is waged, and admit that the American arms were in no way compromised by the dispositions which followed the termination of the armistice. Our greatest difficulty was in obtaining reliable information of the enemy's designs, and we were consequently annoyed by many false and vexatious alarms. On the other