

Chihuahua,—if this fource comes against them, and there is scarcely a doubt of it, what will be the consequences—'tis painful to think of it—they must all be cut to pieces, every thing seized, they march on to *us* here. I shall be torn from the dearest object to me on earth, perhaps both of us murdered, or at best he will be put into one prison, while I am sent to an other without even my bible, or my poor journal to comfort me. But though they may deprive me of *these things*, there are others that they cannot move. I have a *soul*, I have a Savior, the means of prayer are always within my reach. It has comforted me more than once—and

Who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there.

If I could but see *mi alma* easy; he is troubled, does nothing but walk the floor waiting for the next intelligence. I shall be patient and under any circumstances, I hope be resigned and collected. Christ himself warns us that we must not fear those who can kill and in any wise injure the body, and can do nothing to the *immortal* soul. But he says "rather fear Ye him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell."

Sunday 20th. The news today is not quite so discouraging. An other man later from the Pass says there are no regular troops there; and only some three or four hundred men—that Maj. Gilpin had not, when he left there (four days since) arrived; but he has sent back by express to Col. Donaphan, that there is "*plenty of water beyond the jornada.*" This is not as discouraging as we expected yesterday to have heard. This man (a Mexican) [Senor Gonzales] is one that

escorted brother James down. He was also sent to jail from whence he broke out, and came to the Pass, where he was retaken and again put in confinement. A second escape though has brought him into the American portion of the Republic, where he deems himself *safe*. He has been very persevering in his efforts; if Brother James, who he says he left in prison, could be as fortunate 'twould be a very fortunate thing.

Monday 21st. We have heard nothing new today, but are constantly expecting something that will either continue us on our journey or turn us back.

Tuesday 22nd. The movements of the army as we hear it is all I can find to write about these days. Some Americans from the copper mines, and lately from Chihuahua, bring the news today, that we have been so long wishing to hear—viz: where Gen. Wool is passing his time—he has joined Gen. Taylor, and together they have with 24,000 men marched on from Montere [Monterey] to San Luis Potosi, there to meet Gen. Santa Anna, and I suppose to determine by one great battle the fate of the traders *here*, as well as many other things resting the Republic. Our presumption is, if the American arms are successful, the war is at an end, without farther say, if not the whole Republic will be so elated and so confident of their superior valour, they will be unwilling to close it till they have been entirely beaten by the still increasing fource of the American Army, as Congress has ordered out 60,000 in case the present army is unable to end the War.

Wednesday 23d. Today brings it that the troops

have passed through *el janad* [*El Jornada*—the day's journey], and are encamped just on the other side; they have sent back in haste for the artillery which is some half way on their way from Santa Fé, preparing for an engagement,—they talk of building a Fort there; and also of passing the winter instead of going on to Chihuahua.

Tuesday 29th. This is truly exciting times! I doubt if my honoured Grandmother ever saw or heard of more to excite, in the War she was in [War of 1812], than I have here. The Indians are all around us; coming into the soldiers' camp and driving off their stock, and killing the men in attendance on them.

The enemy are advancing on us as we hear today and have even had a battle with our troops only about eighty miles from us. Lieut. Lee⁷⁵ from the army passed us post-haste this morning, for the artillery, as they must have it before el Passo can be taken. . . . He says the battle was fought on Christmas-day 'twas not a severe one, only lasting about 20 or 30 minutes, and is calculated to inspire our troops with more confidence than we had expected. Just as they had gotten into camp & staked out their horses, not expecting the enemy to be any ways near, for scouts had been out in all directions, a dust was seen rising and in a few moments a force of some five or seven hundred dragoons, and nearly as many volunteers and pressed soldiers stood before them. Of course all was in confusion; order was soon restored though, and as will long be remembered of him, Col. Donaphan's first

⁷⁵ This was Lieutenant James Lea of Doniphan's Regiment. He served as assistant quartermaster and commissary officer.

order in battle to his men was "prepare to squat," rather a ludicrous command—but a wise one as the sequel will show, as they squated the enemy fired, and of course all the bullets *passed over their heads*, killing none and wounding only five and they not seriously. It was now our turn for a round—the *first* that, perhaps, every one in our little army of six or seven hundred ever fired. Thirty of the Mexicans were shot dead, five were taken prisoners of war, the wounded we have not heard of and the remaining portion *fled*, leaving one field piece. I believe the only one they had, a good deal of ammunition, and some muskets, which of course our Col. has taken as trophies of victory,—on the whole 'twas quite a nice little skirmish.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The Battle of *Brazito* (Little Arm) was named after a bend in the river near the site of the conflict. This was the first battle of the army of the west, the Mexicans moving upon Doniphan while his men were engaged in pitching camp. He himself was playing cards with his staff to determine which one of the members of the advance guard should have a fine horse, which had just been captured. The horse had been abandoned in flight by some one of a party of Mexican scouts which had been surprised. Doniphan and the members of his staff were each playing for an individual in the guard. Suddenly a forked cloud of dust arose in the distance, arousing suspicion, and Doniphan ordered his men to form in line on foot. A large battle line of the enemy soon came into view, about one-half mile away. Presently a single horseman, an officer bearing a black flag with skull and crossbones on it, approached. He was met by the interpreter, Caldwell, to whom he expressed the desire of his commander for an interview with the American commander. Caldwell told him they could meet halfway between the lines. The man demanded that Doniphan come into the Mexican camp, which was refused. The Mexican then remarked that they would come and get him, and pointed to

Wednesday 30th. The express *mi alma* sent to bring news from the Pass has returned today at 3 o'clock P. M. having been absent a little more than two weeks. The intelligence is altogether in our favour. Col. D. entered and took el Passo on the 28th, the Mexican army having evacuated it the day previous. A company, of three hundred men, has been sent in pursuit of them for the purpose of taking their canon, five or six pieces. Although the number of our troops is not one-third of the enemy 'tis believed they will succeed in their undertaking. Elated with their late success, they will manifest greater courage still, whereas the other party are *flying*, and discouraged, and are expecting to be cut to pieces if overtaken. We learn that their number lost on the 25th was thirty-eight instead of 30.

Enero [January] de 1847.

Thursday 14th. Is it possible that two whole weeks estranged us, my Journal? What have I been about that I have neglected you so long. Well I hope I have his black flag which portrayed their motto: "No quarter asked or given." Caldwell said: "Come on! they are ready for you."

The battle soon began, with the American footmen kneeling and firing alternately, number two firing only when number one stopped to reload. Only seven Americans were wounded, none mortally. The Mexicans were routed and lost sixty-three killed, one hundred seventy-two wounded, including their commander, Captain Ponce de Leon, and three hundred missing.

After the battle Doniphan and his staff went back to the card game, but after they found out which member of the guard was to have the horse, they also discovered that during the battle the horse had been allowed to escape. (M. B. Edwards, "Journal of an Expedition to New Mexico," p. 132, MS.)

not been so badly occupied that I am ashamed to render an account of myself. The sick have called my time.

William has never recovered yet, and how he lingers along, with very little pain too, only weakness, with very excitable pulse, and no appetite. For three or four days *mi alma* was confined to his bed, with severe head-ache, cold, and irritation of the bladder. This was about the first of this month. Next, I had an ugly cold myself which required two or three nights' sweating, and onion poltice before I found relief. For several days past poor little Francisco has been very ill with flux, and I don't know but that it may kill him yet, though I hope and trust that the medicines given him may be blest to his recovery. I shall endeavour to do my duty, as the only benefactors of the orphan, leaving all things in the hands of the Great Giver of all things, knowing that he will never neglect. . . . People have been sending in every day for "remedias," both in the village and from a distance; sickness is great in the country now, and *mi alma* has his name up among the people of the Rio Bajo as a skillful medico, some of the medicines he has administered to the suffering having been of material service. One Snr. Pino⁷⁷ sent some few days since, a horse for him to go

⁷⁷ Don Manuel Pino belonged to one of the most influential families in New Mexico. When the news reached Santa Fé of the invasion of New Mexico by the American Army, the Pino brothers, Manuel and Nicolas, immediately responded to the call issued by Governor Armijo for volunteers, with all the means at their disposal. They at once began raising companies and procuring arms and ammunition. They were with General Armijo