

a distance of 16 miles. After leaving the hacienda Venedito (two miles beyond our camp) the country is poor, barren, and sandy, till we reach the hacienda of Sanceda, on the right bank of the river, which here takes the name of "Rio los Angeles," where the valley is broad, rich, and well cultivated, abounding in corn, cotton, and cattle. We encamped on the left bank of the stream near the intersection of the Parras road and a by-way to the hacienda near the mountain of "Los Angeles," between which and our camp there is a road from Monterey to Chihuahua. Our course to-day was south and southwest, the road being bounded on both sides by high mountains.

November 30.—Broke up our camp before sunrise; the general direction of the route was south 28° west. A march of six miles brought us to the forks of the road; the one leading to *San Antonio de Jarrol*, the other to *Tulia*, which is said to be the better one, but having an uncertain supply of water, in consequence of which we selected the *San Antonio* road. For some distance this route is a mere mule track, exhibiting no signs of having been recently traversed with wagons; it was in places very rough, and intersected with arroyos. At a distance of 13 miles we came to the hacienda *Jarrol*, and three miles further brought us to *San Antonio de Jarrol*, both situated on the same stream with our two preceding encampments; it is here called the "Arroyo de San Antonio." We again encamped on the same stream, after a march of 16 miles.

The hacienda *San Antonio de Jarrol* is a very large corn plantation, which also produces some cotton and cattle. The *Venedito* valley is long, broad, fertile, and highly cultivated, but the road was confined to the high and arid country, covered with a growth of *cacti*—of which there is an infinite variety, many of them of great beauty—*artemesia*, *equiseta*, the *sortal* (from the large bulbous root of which an intoxicating liquor is distilled,) the maguey or agave *Americana*, from which the pulque and muscal (favorite Mexican drinks) are obtained; the *Spanish bayonet*, which is a large tree often twenty-eight feet high and three feet in diameter; the *yucca alvifolia* and the *lecheugillo*, a kind of dwarf bayonet, growing about eighteen inches high, and its leaves dentated like the *sortal* or saw-grass, and their extremities pointed like the *Spanish bayonet*. This plant furnishes the raw material for the mats, ropes, and gunny bags of the country. It is prepared by *rotting*, which destroys all of the leaf but the fibre, which is extremely strong.

The hacienda *Florida* is within sight, some eight miles off. To *Patos* is eighteen miles. The march to-day was nearly due south, but at this point the road turns nearly due west.

December 1.—Left camp at daybreak with the headquarters; but was soon sent ahead to look for an encampment, which we found at *La Pastora*, an "estancia" or cattle rancho, supplied with good water from a well about twenty feet deep within its enclosure. The camp was pitched about a mile from the estancia, partly on a running stream and partly on a reservoir, into which the water of the stream was collected for the use of cattle. The grazing was indifferent and fuel scant. The labores* here are exclusively devoted to the growth of wheat. The road from *Tulio* comes in at this point, passing through our camp. We marched to-day sixteen miles, over a dry and uncultivated country similar to that passed over yesterday, which may in fact be said of every day's march.

*The word *labore*, in Mexico, means either a definite measure of land or a cultivated field.

The fuel generally consists of a small growth of *musquette*, of *huasaché*, (a true acacia,) and a species of *pseudo acacia*. On our march from *Monclova* we have occasionally seen the black-tailed deer; a large kind of hare, (the same I believe as that described by Townsend;) the prairie wolf, and a large black or dark-colored wolf; the American mocking bird, the paisano (described by Major McCall,) the quail (of the U. S.,) and a beautiful tufted dove-colored partridge. The cattle are of the same character as those mentioned in the memoir on *San Antonio de Bexar*; they make excellent draught oxen and good beeves. They have also an excellent breed of hogs in northern Mexico, which attain an immense size; they fatten easily, and their meat is remarkably sweet and nutritious. I think they resemble the China hog; their color is commonly a darkish blue.

December 2.—The march to-day was only eight miles, and the camp was pitched on both banks of the *Rio Tenago*, a beautiful full stream flowing rapidly over a pebbly bottom, after bursting its way through a rocky ledge, over which it falls in numerous cascades. It rises near *Castanena*, where its waters are of a deep red, but the coloring matter is all deposited before reaching this place, and they become perfectly pelucid. At this point a small portion of the stream is drawn off to *La Pastora*, and the remainder is all absorbed by the labores.

In the rainy season it flows into the *Venadito*, (called also the *San Antonio* and the *Los Angeles*,) a tributary to the *San Juan*, the deep, dry bed of which we crossed on the 30th of November, about six miles south of *Sanceda*. When full it would be impassable for an army without bridging or boats.

At *Tenago* we found mournful evidence of the insecurity of life and property in this unhappy and distracted country. A few ruined ranchos showed that there had once been a settlement in this beautiful and secluded valley; but a few years since, as we were informed by a Mexican, a band of *Camanches* made a descent on its peaceful and unoffending inhabitants, and slaughtered 120 in one single building, where they had huddled together like a flock of sheep scared by hungry and ferocious wolves. There is scarcely a mile of our march through Mexico that is not marked by the wooden cross and a pile of stones—sad memento, that on that spot some poor creature had met his fate at the hands of ruthless savages, or of his own countrymen, quite as merciless as the dreaded *Camanches*. On more than one occasion, when our small advance had been mistaken, in the distance, for a party of Indians—for such was the rapidity and silence of our progress that our presence was often a surprise—it was touching to see the women flee to the place where, perhaps, a father, a mother, or a husband had perished, and, clasping the cross in their arms, quietly await that martyrdom which sad experience had taught them to regard as inevitable.

On the 3d of December the army arrived early, after a march of twenty miles, at *Cienega Grande*, and encamped—*Bonneville's* battalion, the advance, having started at 2 o'clock in the morning to avoid the excessive heat of the sun. The road was very rough and difficult for wagons and artillery.

Cienega Grande is situated on the main road from the *Rio Grande*, via *Camargo*, *Monterey*, *Saltillo*, and *Parras*, to *Chihuahua* and *Durango*. It is a large and valuable estate, producing wheat, corn, cotton, horses and cattle; which has been reclaimed, as its name (*Big Marsh*) implies, from an extensive swamp or shallow lake.

The next day we marched eighteen miles and encamped in low ground,

with good water and grass convenient, near the hacienda of San Lorenzo de Obaja. This is the most magnificent and lordly establishment we have yet seen. It is picturesquely situated on a lovely stream of water, surrounded by its alamedas or pleasure grounds, through which the water has been diverted, with long avenues of trees leading up to it from different directions. It is quadrangular in shape, about 500 feet by 300 feet deep, divided by a cross building into two large courts. The exterior aspect is very imposing, with its white surface and turrets on each angle, loop-holed for defence, which lend to it quite a castellated appearance. Its interior arrangements and decorations are very rich, in keeping with the exterior. The floors are formed of cement brought to a perfectly smooth surface, polished and colored, and the walls are painted in fresco. The population of this hacienda, including the surrounding houses, is about 800, the most of whom are peons. The intelligent and hospitable proprietors of this vast establishment were educated at Bardstown, in Kentucky, and appear to entertain most lively and agreeable recollections of the country in which they passed their boyish days. They have important machinery from the United States for their mills, cotton gins, and prizes; and in no part of the world have I seen better farming arrangements—everything is convenient, sightly, comfortable, and efficient. This estate is of immense extent, but of course much of it is not arable, and is valuable only for the rearing of stock. The cultivated land is devoted to the growth of corn, wheat, cotton, and fruits, and to the production of wine and brandy from the grape, and is justly regarded as one of the most celebrated vineyards in Mexico. The wines are of three kinds—the *carlone*, the *vino blanco*, and the *dulce*: the first is a kind of *claret Burgundy*, very delicate and palatable; the second is a species of *Malaga Madeira*; and the third resembles the *muscadell*. They are all pure juice of the grape, and the better kinds, which, when old, give an agreeable aroma, are formed from the natural expression of juice without the application of artificial force. The ordinary kinds are trodden out by naked men in vats. The brandy, “aqua de vide,” resulting from the distillation of the wine, is also a very pure liquor; and if the art of rectification or separating the essential oils was well understood, would no doubt rival the best French brandies. This region of country, the soil of which appears to be calcareous, intermixed with the debris of the slates, may truly be called the land of “corn, of the olive, and the vine.” Its climate is salubrious, mild, and equable, and is exempt from the visitation of the northers; and is by far the most agreeable and attractive portion of Mexico that we have as yet seen. I regret that my short and interrupted visit to it did not permit me to institute those minute statistical, geographical, and economical researches which I had proposed to myself; but the commanding general will readily understand the reasons to which I allude. Corn sells for \$2 50 the fanega, (not quite three bushels;) flour \$9 the cargo, (of 300 pounds;) beef four cents the pound; wine \$1 the gallon, and brandy seventy-five cents.

The Messrs. Yvarras have attempted, but without success, to substitute our agricultural implements for the crude and primitive implements in use. The peons cannot or will not employ them, and, with their characteristic tenacity and aversion to change of habits, obstinately adhere to the rude cart, whose clumsy wheels are formed of segments of hard wood fastened together with trenails and bound with thongs of cow-hide, to which the oxen are harnessed, drawing by the horns; and a plough made

of a crooked piece of wood, iron pointed, which simply scratches over the surface of the ground.

From San Lorenzo to Parras is about five miles. On the 5th December we occupied a position half way between the hacienda and the town. The camp was pitched on a charming plain, watered by numerous springs, facing the town, with the high and magnificent peaks of the Sierra Madre towering in our front, at the very base of which, and occupying the first acclivity of its slopes, is built the lovely town of Parras—a collection of haciendas, perhaps it may be termed, rather than a city, for the vineyards and gardens separate the houses from each other, except on the principal streets. The water, gathered from the recesses of the mountains, and stored on its terraces in large stone reservoirs, is, after irrigating the vineyards, permitted to descend in cascades and numerous brooks to the lower town, all of whose streets it washes.

Parras and its dependencies are said to contain a population of fifteen thousand souls, but I regard this as an exaggerated estimate. Its inhabitants are industrious, sober, thrifty, intelligent, and unfriendly to the present form of their government. From them we experienced nothing but kindness and hospitality. The great mass of the people, including the better class, uniformly exhibited towards us the most amiable deportment, and carefully guarded and attended on our sick, who were necessarily left behind when the army left, protected only by a single company, which was ordered off in a few days afterward. Our camp was constantly crowded with the beauty and fashion of the town, who visited the tents of the officers without hesitation or restraint, and the most cordial feelings and intercourse were established between us. This was the pleasant result of the good conduct of the troops, the largest portion of which were volunteers, and shows what may be made of them by a proper course of discipline, stringent but kind. The town, in a military point of view, may be regarded as a large and strong fortress, easily defended against an assault, and capable of sustaining a protracted siege. But for the friendly disposition of the inhabitants, it might have given us some trouble.

Resumé of distances from Monclova to Parras, Mexico.

From Monclova to Castaña.....	10 miles.	
“ Castaña to Bajan.....	20 “	
“ Bajan to La Joya.....	14 “	(Agua Nueva.)
“ La Joya to Venadito.....	32 “	
“ Venadito to Saucedo.....	22 “	
“ Saucedo to San Antonio.....	16 “	(De Jarral.)
“ San Antonio to La Pastora.....	16 “	
“ La Pastora to Tenajo.....	8 “	
“ Tenajo to Cienega Grande.....	20 “	
“ Cienega Grande to San Lorenzo....	18 “	(De Abajo.)
“ San Lorenzo to Parras.....	5 “	
Total.....	181 miles in eleven marches.	

The division of the army under the command of General Wool has thus marched, taking La Vaca as the starting point, more than seven

hundred miles, transporting its supplies, medical stores, and munitions of war, with a celerity and success almost unexampled in the history of modern warfare; and the day after its arrival at Parras, it was, *in every respect*, in a condition to have resumed its line of march for an equal or still greater distance.*

Although it may seem foreign to the subject of my duties, I cannot refrain in this connexion from paying what I believe to be a well-merited tribute of respect to our quartermaster's and commissary's departments. Certainly no army in the field was ever better served, the evidence of which is seen in what I have just written. I may also, I trust, be permitted here to say, in the last official communication which I may address to you,† that in the discharge of my arduous and multifarious duties I have experienced from the commanding general nothing but kindness and liberality. Almost every suggestion, in the line of my duty, which I had the honor to make to him, was promptly met, and every possible facility extended for its successful execution. And besides this, I may venture to add that I was a daily witness of the zeal with which he exerted himself for the comfort of his army and the service of his country. It may not be inappropriate here to remark that all the inhabitants on our line of march remained quietly at their homes, in the undisturbed possession of their property: not a house, that I am aware of, was deserted, nor was there an outrage, to my knowledge, perpetrated on any of the people. Everything that was procured from the country, either for the use of the army or for the individual use of officers, was most liberally paid for, and persons and property on all occasions respected.

As I was absent on a reconnaissance towards Durango‡ when the army suddenly moved on Saltillo, I must refer to Lieutenant Sitgreaves, topographical engineers, for a descriptive memoir of that march. I rejoined headquarters at San Juan de la Vaqueria on the third day after the army left Parras, having found my way through the mountain passes.§

In closing this communication, there are many reflections in relation to the social, religious, commercial, and political conditions of the Mexican people, the government, and the character of the country we have recently traversed, which naturally force themselves on the mind; but want of present leisure prevents me from giving expression to them now. I write hurriedly, on board of a steamboat, with scarcely time to read what I have written, and I have therefore done but little more than to give you an almost literal transcript of my journal.

* The 6th infantry, 1st dragoons, artillery, and Arkansas cavalry, taking their respective points of departure, had marched, up to Parras, nearly two thousand miles.

† Captain Hughes at this time had been detached, and ordered to proceed with General Worth to Vera Cruz.

‡ See memoir in relation to this exploration.

§ I struck the main road to Saltillo at Castañuela; but such had been the admirable manner in which the division had moved, that until I approached within three miles of the infantry camp under Colonel Churchill, there was no sign of troops having marched in that direction, with the exception of the camping grounds—not a broken wagon, or a dead animal, or a straggler was to be seen; and yet the infantry averaged for two days nearly forty miles a day.

MOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE,
February 1, 1847.

SIR: Being detained at this place for the want of transports to convey us to our destination, I do not know that I can better employ my time than by attempting to supply, to some extent, the omissions and deficiencies of my previous memoir; but whether I shall accomplish it or not will depend on circumstances over which I can exercise no control.

It seems to me clearly the policy of the government to establish a line of military posts on "Woll's road," from San Antonio de Bexar to the ford on the Rio Grande, near Presidio, for the purpose of extending protection to the settlers and traders against robbers and the predatory Indian tribes. To carry out this plan effectually would require a regiment of mounted men, with its headquarters at San Antonio de Bexar, a port on the Quihi; another on the Leona, and the third on the Rio Grande, at the ford. These ports, with the exception of the one on the Rio Grande, might be withdrawn in a few years, as there can be no question that the protection which they would afford would be the means of rapidly settling the country with a population that would soon be able to defend itself. Beside this consideration, it must be obvious to even the most superficial observer that hostilities with the Comanches and Lipans, the most warlike of the native tribes, are neither remote nor contingent. I regard it as inevitable, and believe that we shall never establish cordial relations with them until they have been severely punished—an affair, by-the-by, not easy of accomplishment. A defeat in a contest with the United States would result in their precipitation upon the northern provinces of Mexico, which they would assuredly desolate—a consequence which we may deplore, but cannot avert.

A reference to my memoir, and accompanying maps, in relation to the march of General Wool's army from San Antonio to Santa Rosa, will show how well Western Texas is watered, and may convey some faint idea of the richness and beauty of the country embraced between the Rio San Antonio and the Nueces; beyond which latter river, until we approach the Rio Grande, it would be no great exaggeration to say that "tis all barren." It is true that there are occasional narrow strips of rich land, but for the whole of that distance (64 miles) we crossed but one stream of running water.

All the rivers between San Antonio and the Nueces may be characterized as beautiful and noble streams of clear and excellent water, and many of them would afford an almost unlimited amount of water power; I particularly refer to the San Antonio, the Medina, the Quihi, (perhaps below the settlement,) and the Leona, (nearly equal to the San Antonio.) The others are objectionable on account of their periodical floods. I know of no country better adapted to manufactures than western Texas, and there is perhaps no region of the world where wool can be grown at so low a rate, or where the necessities of life may be produced so cheaply. The heat of the climate, it might be supposed, would deteriorate the quality of the fleece; but such I am told is not the case. The soil is calcareous, with small angular fragments of flinty pebbles scattered over it, the drift from the mountains deposited by a current flowing from south to north, the traces of which we saw at almost every step from the Guadalupe up to San Antonio; and no doubt they may be found beyond it, leading to their mountain sources. The country may be described as a rolling