

# FRENCH SAMUEL GIBBS

TWO WARS: AN  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
GENERAL SAMUEL G.  
FRENCH

Samuel French

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of General Samuel G. French**

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# **Samuel Gibbs French**

## **Two Wars: An Autobiography of General Samuel G. French Mexican War; War between the States, a Diary; Reconstruction Period, His Experience; Incidents, Reminiscences, etc**

### **PREFACE**

Some years ago, when living on an orange grove at Winter Park, it occurred to me that my idle time might be usefully employed in transcribing from memoranda and my diary many incidents of my life for preservation in one manuscript for my children. This was continued at intervals until it became as here presented. It was mainly discontinued after my children became old enough to observe passing events for themselves.

But inasmuch as a few books have been published containing errors in describing some military operations in which I participated, justice to the troops under my command induces me to publish my account of them as recorded when they occurred.

This volume, then, is a simple narrative of passing events, without discussing their importance and bearing politically in shaping the destiny of the nation.

Although my lot was cast with the South, and whatever may be my opinion of the action of the North before, during, and after the war as expressed in these pages, I am as loyal to the Constitution and as ready to uphold and maintain the rights and dignity of the United States as any man within its boundary; and this was evidenced when I tendered my services, as a soldier, to the President before war was declared against Spain.

I do not know that I am indebted to any person, except Joseph M. Brown, of Marietta, Ga., a son of Gov. Joseph E. Brown, for what I have written, and to him I make acknowledgment for obligations.

*The Author.*

Pensacola, Fla., May 1. 1899.

## INTRODUCTION

Of all forms of history, a good autobiography is the most pleasing and attractive. If the writer has been a prominent and responsible participant in great events, if high character warrants his faithfulness to truth, and if the events of which he writes are in themselves of great historic value, his autobiography will possess a peculiar charm and interest for every intelligent reader.

The generation that recalls from memory the events of our history connected with the admission of the great State of Texas into the American Union and the war with Mexico which followed has nearly all gone. Here and there a strong man survives whose memory is clear and whose conscience is true. To hear him talk of these events, or to read after him as he writes of the universal excitement in the country – the angry debates in Congress, the opposition to the admission of Texas, and to the war with Mexico, the brilliant campaign of Taylor, the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista – is to enjoy history in its most attractive form. The historian who has been an active participant in the events of which he writes, whose passions have been cooled by age, and whose judgment has been disciplined by long years of experience and reflection enjoys an immense advantage. However we may disagree with him in his criticisms upon the conduct of men or upon their motives, if he be a man of high and true character, we enjoy the greatest satisfaction in accepting his positive statements as to facts which represent his own actions and experiences.

Gen. French is such a historian. The clear, natural, dispassionate style of his book – its freedom from bitterness, the tenderness with which he dwells upon the history of his classmates at West Point, several of whom became distinguished generals in the Federal army (Grant, Franklin, Ingalls, and Quinby) – all these characteristics of his autobiography soon win the confidence of the reader.

For the general reader of to-day, and especially for the survivors of the Confederate Army, Gen. French's autobiography will possess peculiar interest. The writer has enjoyed the opportunity of reading the advance sheets of the book only through the account of the battle of Allatoona, which was fought October 5, 1864, but as Gen. French participated in the campaign of Gen. Hood up to its predestined disaster at Nashville, the autobiography will be read with more than usual interest by students of the ill-starred march into Tennessee and the battles of Franklin and Nashville.

The venerable author of "Two Wars" has been an able and gallant soldier of his country, and the simple and graphic manner in which he writes of his distinguished services, and relates the great events in which he bore a faithful part, entitle his book to the confidence of his countrymen. It is a most valuable addition to our country's history, and a book which will be of permanent use in the study of our great Confederate struggle.

*Ellison Capers.*

Columbia, S. C., July 1, 1901.

## CHAPTER I

Ancestry – Thomas Ffrench – Military Aspiration – Important Document – Appointment to West Point – New Jersey Farm Life – Great Changes – A Real Yankee – Pennsylvania Hall – The Fashions – Capture of a Hessian Soldier – Rufus Choate and Bishop Wainwright – West Point – Cadet Life – Senator Wall – John F. Reynolds – The Boycott – Rufus Ingalls – Requisites of a Commander.

Inasmuch as the government of this country cannot grant any title to nobility, nor can it be conferred by any foreign power, the people of the United States have, to gratify a natural pride, been obliged to obtain distinction in various ways. Among them may be mentioned the accumulation of money, political preferment, the pride of ancestry, and professional attainments.

The pride of ancestry is a very laudable one, and no doubt it has a guiding influence in shaping the destiny of our lives. We discover it in the honor felt by the members of such societies as those of the Colonial wars, the Cincinnati, Sons of the Revolution, Aztec Club, Sons of Veterans, and many others. And it is true: "Those will not look forward to their posterity who never look backward to their ancestors."

Of the countless millions of human beings who in successive generations have passed over the stage of life, most of them, on their exit, have sunk into oblivion. The names of twenty-seven are all that are known of the human family from man's creation down to the days of Noah.

From the deluge to the present time a few men of great genius as poets, historians, warriors, conquerors, and criminals claim *general recognition* from mankind. All others are relegated or consigned to the special history of a people, and thereby rescued from an otherwise oblivion. As individuals they perish.

I am quite sure we are more indebted to Boswell for a true insight into the life and character of Samuel Johnson than we are to his writings, and there is the utmost interest attached to the home life of all the world's great actors. Even as late as our revolutionary war we find much interest in the part played by the fashionable ladies during the war, and gossip of the Wistar parties, and card parties of New York and Philadelphia. From the "Mischianza"<sup>1</sup> we have a clear insight to the true and gentle character of Major André and his accomplishments; and the beauty of some of the Quaker City belles.

Now in consideration of the desire of every gentleman to have a knowledge of his ancestry, and some knowledge of the times in which they lived, I purpose for the benefit of my children to write down somewhat of things I have seen and a part of which I was, and to make mention of some of the famous men with whom I have been acquainted during the eventful years between 1839 and the present time (1895).

As I was an officer in the United States army from 1843 to 1856, and a major general in the Confederate army, I purpose to relate some of the events of the Mexican and Confederate wars in the course of this narrative.

I was born in the county of Gloucester, State of New Jersey, on November 22, 1818. My father's name was Samuel French, whose ancestry in this country runs back to Thomas French, who descended from one of the oldest and most honorable of English families. The Ffrenches were Normans and went to England with William the Conqueror. In after days some of the family went with Strongbow, the Earl of Pembroke, when he invaded Ireland and "laid waste the country, reducing everything to subjection," whereby they gained great possessions. Thomas Ffrench, who was a descendant of the Norman Ffrenchs, was, as the register shows, baptized in the church now standing in Nether Hayford, North Hamptonshire, in the year 1537. The painting of that church you have.

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<sup>1</sup> A fête given by Maj. André in Philadelphia, May, 1778, in honor of Sir William Howe.

A direct descendant of the aforesaid Thomas Ffrench, also named Thomas Ffrench, an adherent of the Church of England, for some reason abandoned it and became a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), and for this apostasy was persecuted and imprisoned. To escape the persecution he sailed to the colonies, and when he returned to England he became "one of the landed proprietors of West New Jersey in America."

Taking passage for himself, wife, and nine children, he landed in Burlington, West New Jersey, on the 23d of July, 1680, O. S.

In 1664 Charles II. granted to his brother, the Duke of York, the territory along our coast north of the mouth of the Delaware river. The duke sold the land lying between the Delaware and Hudson rivers to the forty-first degree of north latitude to Lord John Berkeley and Sir John Cartaret; who named it New Cæsarea, or New Jersey. They divided it into East and West Jersey; but later, the grant being unsatisfactory to the king, owing to conflicting claims of the proprietors and their heirs, James in 1689 compelled them to surrender or sell their claims to the crown, and all were embodied in one province, New Jersey. Thomas French, under these proceedings, signed the articles relinquishing to the king his proprietary privileges to the one-ninetieth of the one-eighth of West Jersey. Thus New Jersey became a royal colony after the king bought the rights of the proprietors. Sir John Carteret named the land purchased New Jersey because he had been governor of the Isle of Jersey off the coast of France in the English Channel.

My mother's name was Rebecca Clark. She was born January 1, 1790, at Billingsport, on the banks of the Delaware river, in New Jersey. She was married to my father on the 3d day of October, 1816. The names of their children were: Garret, Samuel G., Charles C., John C., Sallie C., and George W.

Passing from family records, I will now revert to myself, and will endeavor to show what creatures of circumstances most men are. One day, when a boy (aged about eight years), my father left me at a store in Market Street, near Water Street, Philadelphia, Pa., where he usually obtained his family groceries. Over the door of that store was a modest signboard, and on it was painted the names, Hamilton and Hood. Mr. Hood was always kind to me, and usually gave me a paper of candy or other sweetmeats. On this particular occasion, it being a rainy day, I was left there alone with Mr. Hood, and I remember now – although near seventy years have passed – what there and then occurred. Eating candies and playing about in the store, I discovered hanging in the office a picture of a young person (full-size bust) clad in a gray coat, with three rows of round brass buttons thereon, braided horizontally. From some cause it riveted my boyish attention. After looking at it for some time, I exclaimed: "Who is that?" Mr. Hood replied: "That is my son." "What is he dressed so fine for?" I asked. Mr. Hood then told me his son was a cadet at the United States military academy at West Point; that he was at school there. Dancing around, I said: "I want to go to that school too." The response was, "Only a few boys can go to that school; to get there the boy's father must have influence with the President, and get an appointment from him," etc. I still looked at the picture, and I can see it to-day as I did then. It will never be effaced. As years rolled on, and I knew nothing about West Point, except that it was not open to all applicants, it was fading away in my mind, until one day when passing along Chestnut Street I saw in the window of a clothing house a large picture of the cadets of the United States military academy on dress parade. I gazed on it a very long time, oblivious to all around me, calling to mind only the remarks made to me by Mr. Hood; on these I pondered long, and made some inquiries, and finally resolved to make an effort to get an appointment to the academy. On entering school, kept by the Rev. Samuel Aaron in Burlington, N. J., my roommate was a boy named Duer, who was from Pennsylvania. One day he opened his trunk and showed me his appointment as a cadet to the United States Military Academy. I told him I wanted to go there also, and questioned him about how he obtained the appointment. It was the same story that Mr. Hood had told me when I was almost a child. But, undaunted by the requirements, I resolved to act for myself, for up to this time I had not mentioned the subject to either my father or mother, because the former



belonged to the Society of Friends, or Quakers; save only that, marrying "out of meeting," he was no longer regarded as an orthodox member, and they were not considered as warlike people in any respect. Accordingly, when at home one day, I wrote to the President of the United States asking in the name of my father the appointment. As his name was the same as mine, I supposed I would get the reply myself from the post office.

I was on the lookout for the answer, when one day I walked, to our house, my Quaker Uncle Charles, and handed to my father a letter that looked to me a foot long, and as it had on the envelope "War Department, Engineer's Office" in large letters, he said he was "anxious to know the contents of the document." As father replied he did not understand why such a letter was sent to him, I rose "to explain."

My father said but little, but my uncle created some confusion by telling the family I was going to the "bowwows" and the "bad place." Without waiting to first ascertain whether I was "going to the war" or not, several of my Quaker aunts called soon after to say good-by before I got shot, as they were sure the British would kill me, so filled were their minds with "war's alarms" caused by the war of 1812.

When peace was restored and my uncle gone, my father told me that if I really desired the position he would aid me in getting it. So one day he took me with him and called on Charles C. Stratton, a relation of ours living near by, and then a Whig Member of Congress. New Jersey was not at that time divided into congressional districts, and a Whig delegation was seated in Congress under "the broad seal of New Jersey," and had no influence with a Democratic administration; and so no appointment came.

But, nothing discouraged, the following winter, being still at the Burlington Academy, I called one day on Gen. Garret D. Wall, then one of our United States Senators, a resident of Burlington. I made known to him the object of my calling. He listened attentively to my request, said that he knew my father and many of my relatives very well, and that he would aid me. The winter passed, Congress had adjourned, and no appointment came.

About this time my father, passing through the town of Woodbury, N. J., happened to stop at the courthouse, and meeting Senator Wall there, asked him about my cadetship, who, on being told the appointment had not been received, sat down in the court room, wrote a few lines to the President, handed them to father, and told him to mail them. In a few days the appointment came, the reward of diligent perseverance and waiting.

Good Mr. Hood! I suppose I often stopped at his store in after years, and yet I can only call to mind one allusion made to West Point. He told me once that his son, Lieut. Washington Hood, was in Cuba surveying a route for a railroad – for Tacon, Governor-General of Cuba – from Havana to Matanzas.

As there may be a desire in long after years to have a knowledge of how the "well-to-do" farmers lived in the early part of the present century in New Jersey, I will describe the condition of the people at my father's. New Jersey was a slave State when I was born. In 1820 slavery was abolished; but there were two hundred and thirty-six slaves for life in 1850 in the State, because it did not emancipate a slave then in being. It only set free the *unborn babes*. You see the difference between *abolition* and *emancipation*? The superabundance of the necessities of life at that period can scarcely be realized now, and every one fared sumptuously, and nearly all alike. Under the house there were four cellars. As winter approached, perhaps forty cords of oak and hickory wood, four feet in length, were hauled to the wood pile. Some twenty or more fat hogs were killed, the hams and shoulders sugar-cured and smoked in a large stone smokehouse. The sides, etc., were salted down in great cedar tanks. The beeves were killed, the rounds dried, not smoked, and the rest "corned." Minced meat and sausage, in linked chains by the hundreds of pounds, cider boiled down in great copper kettles, and apple butter and pear sauce made without stint. Shad from the fishery were bought for salting down for six dollars per hundred. Oysters by the wagon load were in winter put in the

cellar and kept fat by sprinkling them with brine and corn meal. In bins the choice apples were stored, each variety by itself, for daily use, while large quantities were buried in the earthen pits for spring. On the swinging shelves was the product of the dairy, cheese and butter. Four hogsheads were kept full of cider vinegar; and "apple jack" (apple brandy) in barrels in a row, according to age; great old-fashioned demijohns were kept full of cherries, wild and cultivated, covered with brandy. Apples, peaches, pears, huckleberries, currants, plums, etc., were dried on scaffolds in the sun for pies and other purposes: and the children forgot not their ample supply of chestnuts, shellbarks, hazelnuts, etc. Turkeys, geese, and barnyard fowls were raised largely, but they were considered produce for sale. There was no stint to these superabundant supplies, and they were yearly consumed. Rabbits, pheasants, partridges, and woodcock were abundant, and often were secured by trapping; and the ponds and streams were filled with fish. I might perhaps convey to you a better idea of the abundance of fruit and its cheapness by stating that I have seen wagons come to the farm for peaches, and they were told to go into the orchard and get as many as they wanted, and on coming out an estimate would be made of the number of bushels gathered, and they were charged ten cents per bushel. Apples, the finest of varieties, were unsalable, and were hauled to the great public cider mill, ground up for cider, and that distilled into brandy on shares – that is, the mills allowed the farmer a certain number of gallons of brandy for every hundred bushels of apples delivered. And as numerous as were these great cider mills, I have seen the gates locked and teams turned away because of the supply exceeding the capacity of the presses.

There were Germans who wove carpets, and mills that converted the wool into cloth. All along the king's highway, which was marked with granite shafts for milestones, each one denoting, in carved letters, how many miles it was to Camden (Cooper's Ferry), there were smith's shops, wheelwrights, cabinetmakers, and country shoemakers, and taverns for entertainment of "man and beasts."

Daily, four-horse stagecoaches, carrying the mail and passengers, passed over the road, and, by common consent, I suppose, they were granted the right of way, or it may have been the last lingering observance of respect to kingly prerogative.

Now somewhere in this part of the country there lived an old and very polite Frenchman. He possessed a pony and a little wagon, and in that wagon he carried a bench, his lasts, and his tools, for he was a shoemaker, and went the rounds of the neighborhood to make, yearly, the family shoes. Out of morocco imported from Barbary, calfskin from France, and leather from the village tannery he fashioned most beautiful boots and shoes for male and female; yes, neat and befitting they were; and how long they lasted! Wonder not that I have introduced you to this polite and kind old Frenchman. He belonged to the Emperor's old guard, and after Waterloo he came to this country. Young as I was, many times and oft would I persuade him to tell me of "the battles, sieges, fortunes he had passed, of moving incidents of flood and field, of hairbreadth escapes," and grand charges he had made under the eye of the Emperor, how he detested England and loved the vine-clad hills and pleasant fields of France. At our house he would fix himself up in the loft over the carriage house, and then while at work he would tell us boys so much about the "Little Corporal" and the grand marshals of France.

His abiding faith in and admiration for the Emperor passed all bounds. When it was known to all the world that Napoleon was dead, sleeping in a lone grave in a far distant island, guarded by English bayonets, as though he might "awake to glory again" and make the little monarchs tremble once more even at his name, this devoted soldier of the old guard would not believe it, and swore it was an English lie.

I have given these minute details of the manner in which the people lived in New Jersey and adjoining States in the olden times, "when the richest were poor and the poorest had abundance," to show you how well they lived, how comfortably clad, and how content they were in the days when trusts, combines, and protective tariffs were unknown, and no great corporations existed. To-day (1895) these great combines have destroyed individual competition, and impoverished more than half the entire population of the country and reduced it to rigidity of hours and the *slavery of wages*. They

control legislation, corrupt the courts, subsidize the press, maintain advocates in the pulpits, and this will estrange the poor from the rich more widely than the peasant from the prince; and, continued, may implant an unkindly feeling, which, if not placated, may have to be settled by a resort to arms.

What a change has sixty-five years wrought! The stagecoach has disappeared on the advent of railroads, steam will be displaced by electricity as the candle and lamp have been, and as the friction match has banished the flint and steel and tinder box, the scythe and sickle have been superseded by the mower, the magnificent sailing ships have given way to the ocean racers. Ere long we will see the wind pass by as we see the streams of water now. "The cloud of witnesses around that hold us in full survey" may themselves be seen, for we are discovering the secrets of Arcana every day; the source of life and the mystery of death will soon be discovered.

When I was a boy the habitat of the Yankee did not extend south of Connecticut, as bounded by that elegant writer, Washington Irving, in his *veritable* history of New York. In that Knickerbocker history you will find the southern limit of the Yankee. Is it possible to conceive that Wouter van Twiller, Rip van Winkle, William the Testy, or Peter the Headstrong, and the drowsy, dreamy Dutch people of New Amsterdam were Yankees? No! they dwelt farther north; yet they might have overrun and subdued New Amsterdam had not their minds been diverted by a sudden outbreak of witchcraft, that afforded these saints infinite amusement in a pious way, which saved New Amsterdam. When I was young it was not considered complimentary or prudent to call a boy of your own size a "Yankee."

My first recollection of seeing a real Yankee was connected with a clock. At home there stood in the hall an eight-day clock, nearly eight feet high, and it is to-day in the city of Woodbury, N. J., in possession of my sister, Mrs. John G. Whitall. On its face are the words, "Hollingshead, Woodstown, N. J., 1776." I infer that it might have commenced recording time about the hour that the liberty bell in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, on a certain fourth of July rang out the Bible proclamation of liberty to all the land, and the "inhabitants thereof."<sup>2</sup> It is a clock of some repute. It has Arabic numerals to express the hours. The pendulum was adjusted in length to the latitude, and vibrated every second and recorded it. It marked the day of the month, and the month itself, and a picture of a round-faced female would peep up from behind the scenes just as the moon rose, and veiled her face when she set. In the absence of the moon a ship sailed slowly on.

It had another accomplishment: an alarm that was worse than a Chinese gong. I should think that handsome clock, which has been recording time now for one hundred and nineteen years, would have sufficed; but no! One bright May morning, when all the fruit trees were in bloom, and the white-faced bumblebees were buzzing around, and the air was redolent with perfume, a wagon stopped at the gate, and a tall, lean individual came to the door and wished to see the mistress of the house. Said he was "a stranger in these parts, that his load was too heavy for his horse, and that he had clocks and other notions." Father was not in, so my mother gave him permission to leave a clock until such time as he would call for it. So he brought in an eight-day clock about three feet high and adjusted it on the mantel in the dining room. It was rather ornamental, and instead of the common, everyday figures such as were in the multiplication table, it had an I for one, and II for two, and so on, which was the Roman style; and then when it struck the hours, instead of ringing a bell, the hammer fell on a coil of wire, producing a cathedral sound that died away far off.

We all soon got used to the clock, and some three months after when the man called to take his clock away mother said she was attached to it and would keep it. It was all a Yankee trick to sell the clock, for he disposed of many others in the same way. The Yankee clock has ticked its last tick, but the old eight-day clock may outlive the nation whose hours from its birth it has, by seconds, recorded. All *your life* you have heard the people of this country north of the slave States called Yankees, and the people south Confederates, which is not true, but only an incident of the war.

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<sup>2</sup> "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." (Lev. xxv. 10.)

In Philadelphia I was present at the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall, May 15, 1838, an abolition edifice. It was announced that David Paul Brown would officiate at the dedication. His reputation as a lawyer and an orator was well known, and on this occasion he did some stage acting with fine effect. He was hidden away from the surging audience in some manner, and after the chairman had stated the object of the meeting he closed his remarks by saying that David Paul Brown *had promised* to be present to deliver the address. Presto! From concealment he rose to his full height and exclaimed: "And I am here to fulfill that promise, a promise as freely given as it shall be fearlessly performed, and as high priest of this day's sacrifice I dedicate this hall to freedom," etc. A short time after, in the presence of some *ten thousand spectators*, I saw about twenty persons, unmolested, batter down the doors and destroy the building by fire; and from its ashes sprung up the free soil party.

As fashion plates of dress worn sixty years ago are not plentiful, I will briefly refer to the tyrant, Fashion. Men wore tight pants, two inches longer behind than before. In front they were cut away so as to expose the instep, and were fastened down under the boot with a pantaloon strap, and it was no small job to get the pants off. The coat had a collar quilted to give it stiffness, and was, behind, about four inches broad, and one could not throw his head back and well enjoy a merry laugh. Then in front they wore as neck gear a *stock*, yes a *stock* about as comfortable as those public ones used for punishing criminals. These stocks were nearly four inches wide, consisting of a pad of bristles of the hog, fashioned to fit the neck, and were covered with dark silks or satin. The lower part rested on the collar bone, and the upper supported the head aloft while the shirt collar cut the ears. It was "heads up, eyes to the front," and one seldom saw his boots. Young men could not cross their legs when sitting in a chair without accident. John Pope, better known as Gen. Pope, when on furlough returned to West Point with nice linen pants, with straps at the bottom and open down the front, which was found very convenient for a soldier who had to wear a waist belt; and although it shocked the sense of propriety of some maidenly ladies, it caught the eye of Maj. Richard Delafield, Superintendent of the Academy. His hobbies were economy and practical utility. He saw the advantage of Pope's breeches over the broad flap buttoned at the side, and notwithstanding the protest of Mrs. Delafield – who was reported to have said "the cadets thus dressed should not come in person to the house with their account books for orders" – and other ladies, that stern old soldier gave the tailor permission to make the cadet pants open in front, and that consigned to oblivion the broad flap pants. West Point then, as the Prince of Wales now, set the fashions; Pope's pattern of breeches are now worn by all Christian men, and some that are not of that religion.

Out of all the students that were at the academy in Burlington, I know of but one living now, Gen. W. W. H. Davis, of Doylestown, Pa. He was aid to Gen. Cushing during the Mexican war, and a general in the Union army during the late war between the States.

After my appointment as a cadet I made no preparation for the examination for admission to the Academy, because I had no doubt of being able to meet the mental examination, for I had mastered nearly every elementary branch of mathematics, including navigation and Hutton's recreations in mathematics. I never understood or realized the "recreation" concealed in that volume. Recreation, however, is very often a matter of taste. There was a young officer on my staff, W. T. Freeman, who found recreation in going on every expedition, demonstration, or fight that was on hand; and that good soldier, Gen. Richard S. Ewell, often would seek recreation by a visit to the picket line to see what the "Yanks" were doing. Taste will differ, you observe.

When the time was near at hand for me to report at West Point, some of my Quaker aunts came to see me. They had gotten pretty well over the belief that the British would kill me, or that we would soon have another war with England. Our relatives were numerous about Trenton, Evesham, Red Bank, Billingsport, and all the region around, and stories of the old war were common. I will relate but one: When Count Donop, with his six battalions of Hessians, came down through Haddonfield to capture the fortifications on the Delaware river at Red Bank, a Hessian soldier strayed away from the ranks, and, entering the back yard, came up to the back porch of a farmer's dwelling. There

was a churn (in form a truncated cone – that is, it was big at the bottom and small at the top); and moreover, it contained fresh buttermilk. The poor fellow took up the churn and was enjoying a drink when a stout servant girl, coming to the door, took in the situation at a glance, and, instead of crying "Murder," she took hold of the bottom of the churn, raised it up, and thrust it down quickly over his head. It was a tight fit, and as he could not remove the churn he was captured, hid away, and delivered to the garrison after the defeat of Donop's troops. Donop was killed. Often and often I wandered over Red Bank and Billingsport when a boy, sitting down on the great iron cannon strewn all around, meditating on war.

I now bade adieu to good Quaker uncles and aunts (I say good – yes, more deserving, truthful, honest people than the Quakers cannot be found, for they are all good) and father and mother, and took the stage for Philadelphia, thence by the Camden and Amboy railroad went to New York. The two great hotels in New York then were the Astor House and the American.

I felt lonely in the city crowd, and, strolling "down Broadway," heard the noise of voices in a hall, or perhaps it was in a church, so I went in, and soon the orator exclaimed, "It presented to the world the first instance of a Church without a bishop," upon which great applause followed, which I did not comprehend, and at the same time an elderly gentleman rose up and left the stage, causing some commotion. By the papers I learned that they were celebrating their New England dinner, that the orator was Rufus Choate, and the indignant gentleman was Bishop Wainwright, all of which led to a long and bitter newspaper controversy. Leaving New York City, I went by steamer up the Hudson river to my place of destination at the foot of the Catskill Mountains, then robed in purple from the setting sun.

I shall never forget my voyage on the Hudson when life was young and all was bright and fair, and hope imparted a feeling of joy and gladness to all my environments. There were several candidates for admission to the Academy at the hotel. In the morning when I came down to breakfast I chanced to take a seat beside a smart-looking, black-eyed boy, and, finding him not inquisitive, I remarked to him, "I suppose you have a cadet appointment;" and in the twinkle of an eye he answered my question by exclaiming, "May I ask you the same question?" I was amazed, but reverting to his reply, I calmly and deliberately told him that his inquiry would be responded to first, and then he could answer mine at his leisure. That boy was from Connecticut. He graduated second in his class; his name is George Deshon; he is a Jesuit father, Redemptorist, and Paulist, and resides in New York City, spending his life for the good of a fallen race.

I was having a pleasant rest at the hotel, and had been there two or three days when an orderly made his appearance with an order for all the candidates for admission to report at headquarters. Frederick Steele, J. J. Booker, and I were assigned to a room in the south barracks.

I cannot recall to mind much about the examination; I only remember Capt. W. W. S. Bliss asking us some questions in a polite manner, and then dismissing us. In due time we went into camp. J. J. Peck, Vandergrift, and I were assigned to Company D, and occupied the same tent.

As the State of New Jersey was not divided into congressional districts at that time, it did not matter in what part of the State an applicant resided. There were four vacancies in the State, and they were filled by appointing Isaac F. Quinby, Shotwell, Vandergrift, and myself. Shotwell and Vandergrift left the Academy.

During the encampment Senator G. W. Wall came to the Point on a visit, and had all four of us call to see him. He expressed much interest in us, and gave us good advice, as he was personally interested in our success and welfare.

I carried with me to West Point a letter of introduction to John F. Reynolds, of Pennsylvania, who, as general in the Union Army, was killed the first day at Gettysburg. In his death the Federal army sustained an almost irreparable loss. He was a soldier of marked ability; kind, and, above all, was well loved, and the highest position in the service awaited him without his seeking it. He was ever kind to me, and later on, during the Mexican war, I was intimately associated with him. The officers

of Bragg's Battery of Monterey were G. H. Thomas, J. F. Reynolds, and myself, and Reynolds and I occupied the same tent, and I never knew him to speak an unkind word.

Cadet life at the Academy has often been described, and it is so well known that I shall pass it by save with a few remarks. In the first squad of cavalry Grant, when a cadet at West Point, rode the horse that could jump a pole, one end against the wall about seven feet high while the other end was held by a soldier over the top of his head. In the second squad of our class Cave J. Coutts rode the same animal. I never envied them their enjoyment, yet I rode a horse (properly named Vixen) that would go around the ring at a speed that would have distanced Tam O'Shanter's mare when she crossed the bridge of Doon and lost her tail.

One day as our section in mathematics was marching to recitation hall Frank Gardner produced an old silver-cased watch about four inches in diameter. It, as a curiosity, was passed along from one boy to another to examine; it chanced to be in Grant's hands as we reached the door of the recitation room, and he slipped it under his coat bosom and buttoned it up. The regular professor was absent, and cadet Zealous B. Tower occupied his chair. He sent four cadets to the blackboards, Grant being one. Grant had solved his problem and begun his demonstration, when all of a sudden the room was filled with a sound not unlike a Chinese gong. All looked amazed, and Tower, thinking the noise was in the hall, ordered the door closed, and that only made the matter worse. Grant, with a sober countenance, had the floor to demonstrate. When the racket ceased the recitation proceeded. Tower had no idea whence the noise came. Gardner had set the alarm in that antique piece of furniture concealed in Grant's bosom, and it went off. Tower's bewilderment and Grant's sobriety afforded us much amusement, which we could not manifest until we got outdoors, and roared with laughter.

Of all the cadets in our class, I believe I. F. Quinby possessed the most profound and the brightest intellect. It was scarcely necessary for him to study a mathematical proposition. One day, thinking he would not be "called up," he had not opened the text-book. However, Prof. Mahan sent him to the blackboard, and announced a proposition for him to demonstrate. In due time he faced the Professor ready to begin. He demonstrated the proposition in an original manner, frequently interrupted by the Professor, who failed to follow his reasoning, and would not admit the proof to be conclusive. Then cadet William F. Reynolds said: "Mr. Mahan, Mr. Quinby is right; I was attentive, and followed him all through." The result was Quinby wrote out his mode of demonstration and Reynolds handed it to the Professor next day, and the proof was conclusive. Professors are not inclined to have students deviate from the text-books. One day Grant failed to name the signs of the Zodiac, aries, taurus, gemini, etc., so I was asked, some time after, to repeat them, which I did as follows:

The Ram, the Bull, the Heavenly Twins, next the Crab the Lion shines, the  
Virgin and the Scales,

The Scorpion, Archer, and the Goat, the Man who carries the watering pot,  
and Fish with glittering tails.

and was told to translate it into the language of the text-book. Professors were not dependent on patronage, and there was no marked degrees of partiality shown any cadets. Prof. Wier kept one of my paintings in water colors that I regretted very much. One day, years after, I asked President Grant if he would not have the War Department issue an order to have it returned to me, and he said: "Certainly, and you may have any of *mine* that are there." He knew I well understood the humor in the remark about his paintings. However, I neglected to write to him and thus secure my picture. When I visited the Academy in 1881 I saw it hanging on the walls (and it is there now). Those that I left at my mother's in Woodbury, N. J., were confiscated and sold by the United States marshal, and this would have shared the same fate had it been there. After the Confederate war ended some of these paintings were returned to me. Such acts of kindness I appreciated.

When we entered the first class, as usual, we had accorded us the privilege of purchasing of the sutler, Mr. John DeWitt, many articles that were denied the junior classes. Owing to some of the class not being properly treated, the following document was drawn up, to wit:

We, the undersigned, do hereby agree that we will purchase nothing from John DeWitt after this date, except what we have already ordered, or whatever is absolutely necessary, the reason being supposed manifest to every one.

John H. Grelaud,
C. J. Coutts,
Isaac F. Quinby,
N. Etting,
R. S. Ripley,
George Stevens,
G. Deshon,
F. T. Dent,
Henry F. Clark,
J. H. Potter,
R. Hazlett,
Henry M. Judah,
W. K. Van Bokkelen,
George C. McClelland,
U. H. Grant,
C. G. Merchant,
J. Jones Reynolds,
L. Neill,
John Preston Johnston,
J. J. Peck,
H. R. Seldon,
A. Crozet,
F. Gardner,
L. B. Woods,
T. L. Chadbourne,
E. Howe,
S. G. French,
J. C. McFerren,
Rufus Ingalls,
W. B. Franklin,
Joseph Astfordd,

West Point, April 15, 1843.

To explain this *boycott* I copy a letter from Gen Rufus Ingalls to Gen. Isaac F. Quinby, sent to me by the latter when he received it. Quinby's familiar name was "Nykin."

*Portland, Oregon, September 16, 1889.*

*My Dear "Nykin:"* Your letter surprised me most joyously. I was thinking of you constantly and lovingly. Do not give up. Let us *live* to the last possible hour. I hope to meet you this fall – late perhaps. I came here two years ago to stay three months, and here I am! I have had a "monkey and parrot time of it," as these slips<sup>3</sup> will only partially disclose. Read them at leisure. But I am now booming in luck, ... and I expect to save some money out of the wreck for myself and pretty wards. But what a fight all alone for it!

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<sup>3</sup> Newspaper cuttings.

I am robust, never better. Habits perfect; fact. Why not at 70? Did we not cut old DeWitt because he caused some of us to be reported? How is Hamilton? Write me, dear "Nykin." Nail your flag high up, and don't regard dark clouds.

Very affectionately,

*Rufus.*

Gen. Quinby, Rochester, N. Y.

My dear, good Rufus! How I recall the many happy days we have passed together! My love for you was like unto Jonathan's for David, and you have gone and left me, gone to your long home. Yet I can see you now. I can see you at the card table having "fun" even though the "time be 4 A.M." There always was mirth when Ingalls was present. He was the prince of good fellows; ever cheerful, never selfish, full of quaint humor, and was wont to "set the table in a roar."

There is a story related of him that runs in this way: One night in the spring of 1865 at City Point Grant and staff were sitting around their camp fire. Conversation had lapsed into silence, which after a while was suddenly broken by Grant exclaiming: "Ingalls, do you expect to take that yellow dog of yours into Richmond with you?" "O yes, General, he belongs to a *long life* breed," was Ingalls's sober reply. Silence returned, but there were sides ready to burst with suppressed laughter.

Ingalls possessed a brilliant mind. Grant states that, had it become necessary to change the commander of the Army of the Potomac, he would have given it to Ingalls. When at last Lee's weak lines were broken at Petersburg, and certain corps commanders said they could not pursue Lee, Ingalls whispered to Grant, "If you do not order an immediate pursuit, you will be a ruined man; I will have supplies on hand;" and the army was ordered to move at once in pursuit. This was told me by Gen. Frederick Steele in 1865.

But to return to the boycott, I find this matter in the newspapers of the day, and it is termed the oldest boycott known. I have copied the signatures from a newspaper article to correct some of the errors it contained; and I would observe that I cannot recall any member of our class named Joseph Asfordd. About the signature of Gen. Grant having been written U. H. Grant, we all knew that Gen. Harmer obtained him the appointment, and that his real name was U. H. Grant, but the appointment called for U. S. Grant, and he entered the Academy as U. S. Grant, and was usually called "Uncle Sam Grant." Poor Stevens, who it appears had this document in his possession, I saw drowned in the waters of the Rio Grande when at the head of a squad of dragoons he attempted to swim the river. The paper was, I presume as stated, sent home with his effects, and the original, or facsimile, is now hung up in the War Department in Washington City. Of those who signed it, there are now living only four, Father Deshon, J. J. Reynolds, W. B. Franklin, and your father, who is now writing this; and if I write two other names, Gens. C. C. Auger and W. F. Reynolds, you have the names of the six surviving members of our class in 1893.<sup>4</sup>

The class of 1843 is remarkable in one respect. So far as my investigations have extended, every one of the class living in 1861 entered the military service, except Father Deshon; all obtained the rank of general save one. In no class did all the graduates enter the service, nor did those in the armies obtain uniformly such high rank as the class of 1843.

When the encampment ends, and the cadets go into quarters and study commences, the fourth class is formed into sections, taking their names alphabetically. If they desire twelve cadets in the first section, commencing at the A's and B's they go on down until twelve are obtained; the second and other sections are formed in the same way; study and recitation begins, and the struggle commences. At the end of a week some are transferred up to the first and second sections, and others down; and this continues until every one settles to the rank he merits, or at least to the rank his studies entitle him to.

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<sup>4</sup> August 31, 1898. Reynolds and Auger are now at rest, and four remain. April, 1899, Gen. J. J. Reynolds has passed over the river.



High class standing is not conclusive evidence of preëminent ability as a commander. Of all the positions that mortal man has occupied on earth, that of a great captain requires a combination of *more* of the rare gifts that God occasionally bestows on man, each differing in character and quality, than any other profession. In him they must *all* be balanced and in harmony. He must be a great organizer, and a skilled administrator; possessed of courage, untiring energy, and keep the one great purpose in view, crushing every obstacle in the way to its accomplishment. His powers of combination must be made with mathematical precision; his knowledge of the country correct, and at a glance comprehend the field of action; instant to detect an error made by his antagonist, and prompt to avail himself of it; intuitive knowledge of character, acute in discovering men's motives, faultless in reasoning to enable him to fathom the designs of the enemy, and maneuver so as to defeat them. Then comes the prestige of victory, confidence in his success, love for his person; and the army in his hands is as obedient to him as the ship to her helm, and will breast the tempest, be it never so high. From Moses down history does not mention the names of as many great soldiers, for whom "the stars in their courses fought," as there are fingers on a man's hand, and the star of Austerlitz, I think, guided the greatest of them all.

"He who ascends to mountain tops shall find  
The loftiest peaks most wrapped in clouds and snow;  
He who surpasses or subdues mankind  
Must look down on the hate of those below."

I make no reference to heartlessness or selfishness, I speak only of great intellects and boundless ambition that impels the man on, on, upward, till crowns become baubles, and kings who wear them are moved on the world's stage, and traded off like those on the chessboard, who would subjugate the earth, and then sigh for other worlds to conquer.

There is a moral in the lives of some of the most renowned captains. Joshua had trouble with his tribes; Alexander died from excess of drinking in Babylon; Hannibal, living in exile, took poison to escape being surrendered to the Romans; Pompey, thrice a consul, thrice honored with a triumph, master of the world, was assassinated on Egypt's barren strand and left without a handful of the earth (of all the world he once possessed) to cover his remains; Cæsar was murdered in the senate chamber; Cortez died in poverty in Seville, neglected by his sovereign; Napoleon ended his days a prisoner in exile on a desert island; "Stonewall" Jackson, in the zenith of his glory, was accidentally killed by his own troops; R. E. Lee died, after declining many honors, the president of a university in Virginia; Grant, more fortunate, became President of the United States. Yet his life in after years was embittered by his confidence in dishonest bankers, which trouble, preying on his mind, shortened his days.

## CHAPTER II

Graduation – Commissioned Brevet Second Lieutenant, U. S. A. – Ordered to Fort Macon, N. C. – Goldsboro – Journey to Beaufort – Officers at the Fort – Life in a Casemate – Stormy Atlantic – That Oyster Supper – The Wandering Cot – Adieu to Fort Macon – Journey to Washington – Lieuts. George H. Thomas and John Pope – Weldon, N. C. – Go to West Point – Prof. Morse – First Dispatch – Hope Club, Washington – Dinner Given by Surgeon General Lawson – Appointed Aid to Gen. Scott – British Gold – Col. S. Churchill – Integrity of Old Army Officers – Leave Washington for Fort McHenry – Society in Baltimore – Chief Justice Taney.

I believe it was on the 9th day of June, 1843, the examinations ended, we bade adieu to old Fort Putnam, the Crow's Nest, the Dunderburg, the halls, the lovers' walk, the professors, in short to West Point and all that it contained, and took passage on a steamer on the ever-beautiful Hudson for New York City. A new life was opened to us, the wide world was before us, and we believed we were equal to all environments, and anxious for the strife; and, if I possess a correct power of retrospection, we generally had a higher opinion of ourselves *then* than we have had *since* in the battle of life, amid joy and sorrow, hopes and disappointment, praise and detraction, sordid avarice and the little trust in the sincerity of man. In the course of time we comprehended that "all is not gold that glitters."

In a day or two we began to separate for our homes, and I bade farewell to some whose faces I never saw again. When the assignments to the army were made, in July following, I was notified that I had been commissioned a brevet second lieutenant in the United States army and assigned to Company – , Third Regiment of Artillery, then stationed at Fort Macon, N. C.

I was ordered to report for duty by the first day of October. Bidding good-by to all at home, I started for Beaufort, N. C., Fort Macon being on an island opposite to the town. I traveled by way of Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Petersburg to Goldsboro; thence by stagecoach to New Berne and Beaufort.

The journey was made without incident of note. On the train there was a spruce individual from New York City on his way to Charleston. Some one had alarmed him very much about "malaria," and he cautioned me against rising in the morning until after the sun had dissipated the poisonous vapors of the night. The consequence was I remained in bed at the hotel in Goldsboro, waiting for the mist to rise before I did, until I heard the stage horn calling for passengers, and I came near getting no breakfast. But the driver was one of those happy-go-easy fellows, who said: "I am in no haste; go and get your breakfast."

That New York man had alarmed me to such a degree that when a courtly old gentleman came to the stage door with a large basket of scuppernong grapes and requested me to take charge of them to Beaufort, bidding me partake of them bountifully by the way, I thought death was concealed in that basket as the asp was in the one given to Cleopatra. I was the only passenger. After a while I consulted the driver, who was on the box outside, as to the danger of eating grapes in that bilious country, and he assured me there was none. So timidly I took one and found it "was good for food" like the apple in the garden of Eden, and in spite of fears I partook of them freely.

When I arrived in Beaufort I found there to meet me Lieut. C. Q. Tompkins, and I sailed with him over to the fort. One company constituted the garrison. The officers were Capt. W. Wall, Lieuts. Tompkins and E. O. C. Ord, Dr. Glenn, and Capt. J. H. Trapier, engineer officer. The company was composed of old soldiers and required but little drilling, and so our duties were light. I spent most of my time sailing on the sound and fishing. The waters teemed with fish, and both game and oysters were abundant.

There had been a report that the company would soon be ordered to Fort McHenry, Baltimore, and all were anxious to leave the place, for they had been stationed there over two years.

As time passed on they expected by every mail the order for them to leave, but it came not. However, one evening toward the close of November when we were enjoying a good supper, Mingo, the best of old colored servants, announced the arrival of the day's mail, and placed all the letters before Capt. Wall. Opening a ten-inch buff envelope from the War Department, he took therefrom a letter, and as he glanced over it a smile played over his countenance, observed by all. Ord exclaimed: "That is the order for Fort McHenry!" Dr. Glenn bet wine with Ord that it was not; and while the bets were being arranged Capt. Wall handed the letter to me. I read it with surprise; it was an order for me to proceed to Washington City and report to the Board preparing the artillery tactics, composed of Maj. John Munroe, Capts. Francis Taylor and Robert Anderson. There was dejection of spirits on the faces of all present; but Ord rose with the occasion, and ordered Mingo to have three bushels of oysters in the shell prepared, and to bring on the accompaniments. I left them late at the table and retired to my casemate room, and I avow to this day that some invisible spirit seemed to move my cot around the room. Round and round it went. I leaned against the table in the middle of the room and enjoyed the circus for a while, but the cot would not grow weary. After some vain attempts I caught it as it passed by, threw myself on it, the light burned dim, and I fell asleep.

But O the vivid recollections of the wild, incoherent dreams of that night, the aching head and quickened pulse. Childish scenes arose. I was at the home of my childhood. I was crossing the Delaware river on the ice, as in days of yore, and was carried away on a floating cake. It was dark, and no one heard me cry for help. Then I was at a hotel, and a girl, once so lovely, on whom I lavished all the love of a child, came in to dine. She was old, ugly, and changed, and I gazed on her in horror. Next I was in command of a fort on the banks of a river, and British ships of war were coming up; they opened fire, and I ordered our guns to reply, and not one could be fired; in vain the gunners worked while the fleet passed by, and I cried in agony of mind. Like a kaleidoscope the vision changed. I became an essence of the Creator of the universe, and the universe was heaven. A spirit robed in white was with me. Gravitation was destroyed, and we moved with the rapidity of thought, past the moon, past the sun, past the stars. Whither I wished we went. Bright suns were on all sides, above and below, rolling in silence in the infinite ethereal spaces which had no center and were without bounds. When I asked what power held all these worlds in a relative position no answer came. I was alone! Phantoms of a burning brain! I was at West Point again, in Kosciusko's garden, walking on the banks of the Hudson. I saw a cave and entered it, and immediately a rock weighing tons dropped down and closed the entrance. A passage led to another chamber, and again came a vast rock and closed it. I was now in darkness in a vaulted cave, shut in from the world and all the worlds that were shown me. As I sat down on a rock in despair, a ray of light was seen through a crevice in the rocks. Hope came to my relief. The passage was small. After I had got partly through, my body, in fright, began to swell, and I could neither go on nor get back. Breathing had nearly ceased, and I could not cry for help, or move hand or foot.

From this condition I was awakened. The vision bore away, and I found myself lying on my cot, and an old hag that had assumed the form of a peculiar cat was standing on me holding me down on my back. Her body was a part of a broomstick; her legs were rounds of a chair with wire hinges at the joints; her head was like three sticks forming a triangle, with ends projecting for ears. Her countenance was like a cat's. Her forefeet were on my chest pressing it down so that I could scarcely breathe, while her savage eyes glowed with rage in my face. I was awake and remembered that circulation of the blood would relieve me from this horrible nightmare. I gave my body a sudden turn, the blood rushed through my veins, the witch flew through the window, and the day was dawning. My head was swimming like a buoy on the water.

The elixirs of Cagliostro, the preparations of Paracelsus, the use of *hashish* of the Mohammedans, never produced visions or dreams more strange and painful than did that, my first and unwilling trial of old "Monongahela."

I drew a moral from my experience on that occasion, and have never forgotten it. May you draw a good one from it also!

The next morning the officers accompanied me to the landing. Bidding them good-by, I got in the boat and sailed over to Beaufort. My stay at Fort Macon was pleasant, and I was not overjoyed to leave the place. I could lie on that treacherous cot and be lulled to sleep by the ever-murmuring sea, or awakened by the thundering waves of the stormy Atlantic that seemed to make the island tremble at the shock; and I could tell at night by the lightning's "red glare" and the breaker's roar when a storm was moving on over the Gulf Stream.

The casemate used for a magazine adjoined mine, and in it were stored many thousand pounds of powder, and the lightning rods did not quiet all my fears when those violent thunderstorms passed over the island. Along the shore near Cape Lookout these violent winds had buried large pine forests in sand ridges.

Well, I journeyed back to New Berne alone in the same Concord stagecoach I came in, and remained there all night.

I now began to observe the difference in manners, customs, and deportment of the Southern people from the people in the North. I shall refer to this, perhaps, farther on. I noticed that the outer door to the general lounging room was never shut. The weather was cold; servants piled on the hearth pine wood in abundance, till the flames roared up the chimney; men came in and men went out, and never a door was closed.

After supper the landlord drew up a chair near mine, close by the bright fire, and we entered into a conversation about the people and the surrounding country.

A negro servant came in to replace the fuel and departed, and I availed myself of the occasion to ask the landlord for what purpose doors were made, and he was amazed at my want of information on such common affairs. I think I demonstrated to him that to keep the doors closed would be economy in fuel and comfort to his guests. He must have been convinced, for in the morning I found the servants closed the doors when passing in and out. This custom of open doors prevailed generally in the South. When I boarded the train at Goldsboro, among the passengers were two officers that were at the Academy whilst I was there, George H. Thomas and John Pope. As Thomas was on a visit to his home in Southampton County, Va., on the line of the Weldon and Norfolk railroad, he persuaded Pope and myself to go on with him and take the steamer from Portsmouth to Baltimore instead of the route by Richmond; and so we remained all night in Weldon. The weather was cold and the ground covered with snow, and the accommodations miserable. I little thought then that I would be destined, nineteen years after, to sleep there again with snow on the ground and a tent for shelter, but so it was. On the way to Norfolk the rails were covered with frost and the driving wheels slipped so that we all had to get out the cars and help push the train over a slight ascent to a bridge. There was not much comfort on the trains in those days.

On reaching Washington I reported to the Board of Artillery. They handed to me the manuscript of work to be published, and directed me to prepare drawings of horses, harness, guns, gun carriages, and all the maneuvers of the battery to be illustrated by plates.

I was engaged in the performance of this duty from the early part of December, 1843, to November 12, 1844. When the drawings were all finished, there were added drawings of all heavy guns, their carriages, implements, etc., and I am pleased to state that the Board, after comparing them with the manuscript, accepted them without the alteration of a line, letter, or dot.

I went to West Point to make the drawings for the horse artillery. During the latter part of my stay there I occupied a room at Mrs. Kinsley's. Lieut. John Newton, W. S. Rosecrans, William Gilham, and W. R. Johnston also had quarters there. They were on duty as assistant professors in

the Academy. From West Point I returned to Washington and made the plates of the heavy artillery. Thence in September I went to meet the Board at Old Point Comfort. Gen. John B. Walbach was in command of the post, a gallant old German who entered our army in 1799. A large number of officers were on duty there. The hotel was filled with beauty and fashion; and, as I had nothing special to do, I was free to join in the amusements the locality afforded. From Old Point Comfort I returned to Washington early in November, 1844. During the summer of this year, and whilst the Democratic convention was in session in Baltimore, Prof. Morse invited Lieut. I. F. Quinby and me to ride with him to the capital to test the telegraph line built from Washington to Baltimore by act of Congress. On arriving at the capital the Professor signaled to the operator in Baltimore, and in a short time the following message was received by him:

Convention not in session now. Polk stock in the ascendancy. Douglass now addressing the people.

Or words to that effect; and this was the first telegram ever sent in the United States. I have seen it stated that the first message *announced the nomination*. That must be an error, because the one he received was before the nomination had been made.<sup>5</sup>

From Washington I was ordered to join my company at Fort McHenry. That order to leave Fort Macon, and about which so much anxiety was manifested when I left there, was afterwards received and the company moved accordingly. Maj. Samuel Ringgold was in command of the post, and among the officers were Randolph Ridgely, W. H. Shover, Abner Doubleday, E. O. C. Ord, and G. W. Ayers, and P. G. T. Beauregard was the engineer officer.

Fort McHenry, at this time, was considered one of the most desirable posts to be stationed at in the whole country.

During the autumn and winter there was a great deal of gayety in Baltimore, and some of the officers of the post were generally at the balls and parties given. The ladies of Baltimore from their ancestors inherited beauty; and from their environments naturally acquired retiring manners, low and sweet voices, gentleness, attractive grace; and, conscious from childhood of their social position, they were sprightly, exhibited hauteur to none, and moved in the mazy dance so courtly, so slow, and "courtesied with a grace that belonged to an age in the long, long ago."

On one occasion a masked and fancy dress ball was given by a gentleman with whom I was not acquainted, to which many of the élite of the city were invited. A description of that ball which was promptly published in the New York *Herald* created much excitement. The writer, not content with describing dresses and characters represented, touched truthfully some tender points peculiar to each individual. There were many accused of the authorship, and all denied it. Rewards were offered for the discovery of the writer. No one thought it could have been done by any person not present at the ball, but so it was. Only two persons could name the writer.

I went with him, about two days after the publication, the round of morning calls, and we had much enjoyment at the criticisms made by the ladies. Many were indignant; others enjoyed it. Some equivocal expressions had been used in reference to one young lady. She first shed tears; then, smiling, said: "Well, I would rather be described as it was written than not to be mentioned at all." The writer was a promising young lawyer, long since in his grave. I have not seen the other confidant since the war. He was in the Confederate army.

One of the most accomplished young ladies in Baltimore was Miss Charlotte R. She belonged to no "circle," but was beloved by all. Among her admirers at that time were Chevalier Hulseman, *Charge d'Affairs* for Austria, Lieut. Ord, and myself. Two years after, on the banks of the Rio Grande, before a battle that was inevitable, I sat by a fire and committed to the flames letters that I did not intend should be read by any one, and, being alone, perchance some were moistened by a tear.

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<sup>5</sup> It is also reported that the first message over the line, sent by a young lady, was: "What hath God wrought!" The Professor did not mention this, and this dispatch was sent over the ocean cable years later.

My father was in politics a Whig, and firmly believed Gen. Jackson deserved to be shot for hanging Arburthnot and Ambriester when he took possession of Florida; and he thought Roger B. Taney no better than a robber because he removed the government deposits from the United States Bank. Now among the pleasant families that I visited at this time in Baltimore was that of Chief Justice Taney, a man so kind, gentle in manner, so plain and unpretending at his home, that I wondered to what extent a venal party press would vilify a pure and honest man who faithfully interpreted the law.<sup>6</sup>

While in Washington in 1843 I made my home at the "Hope Club," a club composed mainly of unmarried army officers permanently stationed, or at least on duty there. Gen. George Gibson, Commissary General, was the president of the club. He was one of the best men I ever met; kind and considerate of the feelings of every one, a gentleman of the olden time, a man of patience and unruffled temper. He and Judge Bibb, Secretary of the Treasury, would go to the long bridge and fish all day for a minnow, or even a nibble. Capt. J. C. Casey was the Treasurer. He was a very entertaining man, and had more influence with the Seminole Indians than any one connected with the government. He was a commissary, and they had abiding faith in him because, as they said, "he told them no lies."

One day on taking my seat at dinner I turned up my plate and found under it a note from Surgeon General Thomas Lawton inviting me in the evening to dine with him. As I saw no one else had an invitation, and I was only a lieutenant, I was not inclined to go alone, but Gen. Gibson, Casey, and others told me to go by all means. At this time Lieut. Thomas Williams came in and found an invitation also, and it was decided we would go.

The Doctor had a dinner of thirteen courses, provided by the prince of restaurant caterers. The wines were old and rare. The guests were Gen. Scott, Commander in Chief of the Army; Col. Sylvester Churchill, Inspector General; Lieut. Williams, and myself. Scott, Churchill, and the Doctor discussed the war of 1812 on the Canadian line, and the battles fought there; told how once they had so many prisoners and so few to guard them that they cut the suspenders of the prisoners to prevent their escape so easily, as it required one hand to hold their breeches up. I remember another that shows there must have been a good feeling between the officers on either side. Maj. Lomax, for some purpose, was sent to the British camp; and when he returned he was eagerly asked what news he had. "News! why there is British gold, yes, British gold in this camp." That seemed to imply treason, and an explanation was demanded, and it was given when Lomax from his pockets covered the table with English sovereigns. He had been entertained cordially by the British officers. The dinner did not end until midnight. Gen. Scott drank sherry only, except when sampling some choice wines that the Doctor bid the butler open. Col. Churchill was in fine humor, and partly

O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

At last the hour arrived to leave; then Gen. Scott, raising himself to his full height, and either impressed with the importance of the occasion, or thinking perhaps he was again at Lundy's Lane, "ordered his own aid, Lieut. Williams, to conduct Col. Churchill to his home, declaring it was not

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<sup>6</sup> In the celebrated Dred-Scott case (see Howard's "Supreme Court Reports," Vol. XIX., page 404) you will find that Justice Taney, in describing the *condition* of the negro more than a hundred years *before* the Declaration of Independence, said: "It is difficult at *this day* (1856) to realize the state of public opinion in relation to that unfortunate race which prevailed in the civilized portions of the world at the time of the Declaration of Independence, and when the Constitution of the United States was framed and adopted... They had, for more than a century before, been regarded as a being of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic whenever a profit could be made by it. The opinion was, *at that time*, fixed and universal in the civilized portions of the white race." The above is merely a historical fact as regards the status of the negro about *two hundred years before* the judge rendered his decision. And now behold! For political party purposes; by the abolitionists; from the pulpit; by college professors; by *all* who have hated the South, it is to this day tortured into a *decision* made by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, which is not true. Furthermore, and before this case was in court, Judge Taney had manumitted his own, inherited, slaves; and as a lawyer had defended a man in court for publicly uttering abolition sentiments. In fact he regarded slavery as an evil, and proclaimed it by deeds. (See "American Authors' Guild Bulletin" for April, 1898.)

prudent for him to venture in the streets unprotected." Then turning to me with much dignity, he announced: "And I appoint Lieut. French a special aid to accompany me to my residence."

The streets were deserted and silent, and the walk short. Taking his arm, I went with him to his home, rang the bell, and his servant met him at the door, and there my services as aid terminated. In after days and after years he was ever considerate and kind to me. The conqueror lives, but the man is dead. But O how pleasant the recollection of the times when those pure and knightly men with generous hearts, untouched by avarice, never closed the "door of mercy on mankind." Such men were Gens. Scott, Jesup, Gibson, Towson, Lawson, Totten, Abert, Cooper, and others. Then men served God and their country rather than mammon. The maddening, wild, and frantic rush for wealth was unknown, and life was one of enjoyment without extravagance.

## CHAPTER III

Death of Hon. A. P. Upshur, Secretary of State – Calhoun Appointed – Treaty of Annexation of Texas – Declaration of the State of Massachusetts – Texas Accepts the Resolution of Annexation – Formation of Army of Occupation – Transferred to Maj. S. Ringgold's Battery of Horse Artillery – Officers Sail for Aransas Pass – The Wicked Captain – Becalmed – Cross Bahama Banks – Key West – Out of Drinking Water – Fare on Board Ship – Storm – Aransas Pass – St. Joseph's Island – Maj. Ringgold's Cook – Embark for Corpus Christi – Game and Fish – Horse Racing – White Horse of the Prairies – Trip to San Antonio – The Town – Incidents of the Trip.

At this time there was being discussed by the public a matter that was destined soon to put an end to the pleasant life we were leading here.

After the death of Abel P. Upshur, Secretary of State, John C. Calhoun was appointed to fill the vacancy, and the question of the admission of Texas as a State was discussed, and on the 12th of April a treaty of annexation was signed by him; and it was rejected by the Senate of the United States. So bitter was the feeling that, notwithstanding the purchase of Louisiana and Florida [and Alaska since], Massachusetts, through her Legislature, declared that Congress had no right or power to admit a foreign State or Territory into the Union; and that if Texas was admitted it *would not be binding on her*. By this Massachusetts made a declaration which the State could not carry out without *seceding* from the Union, yet she seceded not.

Soon after the inauguration of Mr. Polk as President a resolution for annexation was passed by Congress, and on June 23, 1845, Texas accepted the resolution, and became a State in the Union December 29.

It became evident now, when Texas accepted the resolution, that the government would be obliged to defend the new State from invasion by Mexico, and the army officers were anxious to go to the frontier to defend the boundary of the country. To meet the threats of Mexico, an army of occupation was gradually formed at Corpus Christi. When the order came for Maj. Ringgold's battery of horse artillery to be in readiness to move, and the Adjutant General came over to Fort McHenry to transfer some of Capt. Wall's men to Ringgold's company, I asked Ringgold if he wished me to go with him. Taking me by the hand, he exclaimed, "My dear fellow, yes;" and, turning to the Adjutant General, he asked him to make the transfer and 'twas done, and I made preparations to leave.

The ship Hermann was chartered, and the horses, to the number of one hundred and fifty, were put on board the ship between decks, in temporary stalls, secured by broad canvas bands under their bodies to prevent them from being thrown from their feet by the motion of the vessel. The company officers were Ringgold, Ridgely, Shover, Fremont, and myself. The officers left in the fort were Wall, Tompkins, and Ord. After we left, this company was ordered to California. W. T. Sherman was with it; and they were quiet on the shore of the Pacific during the war. I met Ord once after the war in Washington. His hobby then was the Australian boomerang. He took me to a room, about sixty by forty, to show me how he could throw them to the end of the room and make them come back and fall at his feet. He was studying out some machine to discharge them rapidly and thereby fill the air with scythe blades to cut off the heads of an enemy, and every boomerang that did not strike an enemy was to return to the fort. I could not see why this boomerang, when it returned, would not injure the person that sent it. And thus it is; we all have some hobby on hand, but fortunately most of them are as harmless as Ord's boomerang, except we cannot get off this kind of a horse and rest and sleep as we do from a real horse.



The day came when the cry was heard: "All on board." "Farewell," the parting word of friends, was spoken, the lines cast off, and the ship passed down the Patapsco river to Chesapeake Bay, to the Atlantic. The voyage to Aransas Pass was tedious and not particularly eventful. The captain was a scoundrel and a sinner. I found amusement in going aloft and sitting in the foretop surveying the ocean's wide expanse without intrusion. When we neared the Bahamas we were becalmed nine days, and the wicked captain would lie on his back and curse even his Creator.

I had, as well as the captain, made all the observations for latitude and time, to compare with his. We reached the "Hole in the Wall" about sunset, and I made a sketch of it; passed Great Stirrup-cay light about 10 P.M. At 2 A.M. the captain and mate came into our cabin, where his chart was on the table, and he tried to impress on the mate that the light ahead was the Florida light; that he had crossed the Gulf Stream and was nearing the Florida coast; and that the ship's course should be changed southerly. I heard this with alarm, for I could not believe it possible that we had passed the "Great Isaacs" and the Straits of Florida. I went on deck at the dawn of day, and saw white sand and rocks that did not appear more than a dozen feet beneath the water. I went forward, found the captain, and asked him if he was not on the Bahama Banks. He denied it. I went immediately and made known the situation to Maj. Ringgold. He appeared to take but little interest in the matter, supposed the ship was all right, etc.

About sunrise he came out, and I called his attention to the shoal water and rocks and the lighthouse on our *starboard* bow. He spoke to the captain about what I told him, and was informed that I was a boy and did not know what I was talking about. The blue line of the deep water was in front of us, and a bark under full sail on the other side of the lighthouse heading south; and as we neared each other our captain took his trumpet and asked, "What ship is that?" and the reply was prompt, "What in h-ll are you doing there?" I turned to the Major and asked him if that answer did not explain the situation. The bark was the Caleb Cushing, bound to New Orleans laden with ice. I believe to-day it was an attempt to wreck the ship, where life was safe, to get the insurance.

As we were nearly out of drinking water, there was a necessity to run into the nearest port for a fresh supply, and the ship put into Key West. What a relief! That miserable captain had fed us on junk meat, boiled dried-apple pudding, and hardtack with weak coffee. I have never eaten any of these dishes since. We remained in Key West one day and night, and sailed the next morning. There we got some West Indies fruit and plenty of limes.

The ship was now provisioned with green turtle, the only meat I saw in the market in the town, and now turtle was substituted for salt beef; and henceforth it was turtle steak, turtle soup (in name only), and turtle at every meal until it became as unpalatable as junk beef. Some days after leaving Key West clouds from the south-east began to fly over, extremely low, driven by a current just above us. The captain took in sail, leaving only spread the jib, fore-topsail, main topsail, and spanker, and I believe the mainsail. I was sitting in the cabin when all at once tables, chairs, trunks, and everything moveable were shot to the starboard side in a heap. I caught hold of some fixtures, got out the cabin, which was on deck, and clung to the weather shrouds. The ship was nearly on her side. The captain jumped for the halyards, sailors slid down the deck, feet foremost, to let them go. I had been anxious to be in a storm on the ocean, and here was one quite unexpected.

What riveted my attention mainly was the roaring of the tempest through the rigging. The great shrouds vibrated with a sound that made the ship tremble, and every rope and cord shrieked aloud in a different tone according to size, creating a thundering, howling, shrieking roar that impressed me with awe not unlike that I felt *under* the falls of Niagara. I was so fascinated with the music of the tempest that I was oblivious to the thought of danger, until the ship began to rise from her side, and when she rose well on her keel I thought the horses would kick the vessel to pieces.

When we arrived at Aransas Pass the sea was high and the wind strong, and no lighters would venture outside to come to us. The discharging the cargo was tedious, as the horses had to be swung

to the yardarms and lowered into the pitching tugs alongside. I had been forty-six days on board ship, and joyous was it to be landed on St. Joseph's Island.

I will make a small digression here, because it will shed some light on matters hereafter, and show that a camp may have some attractions as well as a palace.

Maj. Ringgold carried with him a middle-aged colored servant who had much experience in arranging dinner and supper parties in Baltimore. He cared for nothing save to surprise us with dishes that would have delighted Lucullus. Such pompano, baked red snappers, boiled red fish, delicate soups, turkeys, geese, ducks, and game birds on toast. In pastry he had no superior. Never could we, by money or otherwise, discover how he prepared his sauces. In taste in arranging a table he resembled Ward McAllister, and he was fitted for a "chef" at Delmonico's or the Waldorf.

Ridgely had an old slave servant, and Shover and I colored men hired. They were all true and faithful servants, yet in disregard of instructions they would ride down and find us on the battlefield with a good luncheon. They always wished to go with us when there was a prospect of a fight. So now you can understand how much I rejoiced to leave that villainous captain and ship, and enjoy again the luxury of a clean table.

The terms of annexation proposed by the United States were accepted July 4, 1845, and Gen. Taylor was already at Corpus Christi with a considerable force when we landed on St. Joseph's Island. Consequently our stay on the island was soon terminated by our embarking on a light draft steamer for Corpus Christi. As the water is shoal in front of this place, the steamer was anchored near a mile from shore, and the horses thrown overboard and made to swim to land. Corpus Christi is on the westerly side of the Nueces River, and consequently the United States troops were occupying the disputed territory. I have no date to guide me now, but it must have been about the last of October when we landed on the barren sands of the Bay of Nueces. Here a permanent camp and depot were established, and discipline in the troops commenced.

There was but *one* house in this *town* at that time. It was a canvas town. It was not an unpleasant place to be in. Lieut. John B. Magruder was a good theatrical manager, and under his charge a theater was constructed, and a fair company of actors enlisted. This attracted some professional of the boards, and thus nightly entertainments were provided. The disciples of Isaac Walton had rare sport in the bay and streams; and sportsmen a field for all kind of game. During the winter a cold "norther" prevailed, and thousands of green turtle, pompano, red fish, red snappers, and other of the finny tribe were benumbed and cast on the shores on every side. The number of wild geese that nightly came from the prairies to rest on the waters of the bay was beyond estimate. A few miles up the bay, at sunset, the geese would obscure the sky from zenith to the verge of the horizon, and bewilder the young sportsman, who would always want two or three at a shot instead of one. Ten minutes, usually, would suffice to get as many geese as our horses could carry.

Deer and turkeys were abundant, but on the open prairie would provokingly move along in front of the hunter just out of range of shot. Jack or English snipe would rise from the marshy places in flocks instead of a brace. There was a bird frequently seen in the roads and paths near camp, always alone, shaped like a game cock, that excited curiosity. Finally it was shot, and is now known as the chaparral cock.

Soldiers found amusement in betting on Mexican ponies trained to stop instantly on the slightest touch of the reins. A line would be marked in the sand on the seashore, and the rider of the pony would take all bets that he could run his pony a hundred yards at full speed and stop him instantly (say) within a foot of the line, and not pass over it; and they generally won the bets.

Many fleet ponies were brought there, and racing was a daily occurrence. On one occasion the officers got up a grand race. Capt. May and Lieut. Randolph Ridgely were to ride the respective horses. When mounted, May's feet nearly reached the ground; and they rode "bareback." It was an exciting race. On they came under whip and spur amidst the crowd shouting wild hurrah. As they crossed the goal, May thoughtlessly checked his pony, and instantly the animal straightened his

forelegs and stopped; but May, not having braced himself, went on. Seizing the pony by the neck with both hands, his legs rose in the air, and he made a complete somersault, landing on the ground some twelve or more feet in front of the pony. As he was not injured, the crowd went wild with joy.

A great number of Mexicans would daily visit our camp with horses, or rather ponies, saddles, bridles, blankets, and other horse equipments for sale. I have had a horse and saddle offered for seventy-five dollars, or seventy for the saddle and five for the horse. I bought the best trained hunting pony that I have ever known for fifteen dollars. The owner protested that he was "mucho bueno" for hunting, and so he proved. At full speed he had been trained to stop instantly the moment a motion was made to fire the gun. I once had this pony to go up and rub the side of his head on the wheel of a piece of artillery when being fired rapidly in battle. He loved the smell of gunpowder better than I did. Nearly all the officers bought ponies for themselves or servants to ride. We heard so much about the great snow-white horse of the prairies, with a long flowing tail that swept the green grass, and a mane below his knees, that I thought it was a phantom horse on the land like the flying Dutchman on the sea. I was mistaken. I heard one day he had been lassoed and sold to the quartermaster of the post, so I went "for to see" him. There he was, chained to the pole of an army wagon. He would kick at every person and animal that ventured near him. I left him kicking at the man who fed him on hay tied on the end of a twenty-foot pole. What became of this emblematic horse I cannot tell.

The desire "to know the world by sight and not by books" was increased. I had seen the Atlantic's deep heaving swells, the tempest in its might on the gulf, the calms on the borders of the tropics, with those never-to-be-forgotten beauties caused by the setting sun behind those wonderful clouds. Every evening as the sun declined, great banks of blue and purple clouds would form, presenting to the eye, without the aid of imagination, the most lovely plains, bold mountain ranges, whose tops were draped in fantastic clouds. Temples that were as gloomy as Egypt's; castles as enchanting as those on the Rhine; chariots with horses; human faces and animals in silhouette; lions in repose and lions rampant; phantasms woven out of clouds by rays of the setting sun; all, all changing in expression and form by the gentle movements of the clouds, fading away in outline into one vast glow of crimson twilight that dissolved into air;

"And like the baseless fabric of a vision, left not track behind."

And now learning that a small train of wagons would soon leave for San Antonio, I obtained a month's leave to visit that city, made memorable by the defense of the Alamo and other tragic events. When the time came to start I met Lieut. W. L. Crittenden, who told me he had a leave and was also going with the train. The expedition was in charge of Capt. N. B. Rossell. When we came to the San Patricio crossing of the Nueces river the train could not cross by reason of the rains. Impatient of delay, I proposed to Crittenden and two gentlemen from Kentucky that we "cut loose" from the train and proceed on our journey. There was with the train a Mr. Campbell, who lived in San Antonio, and he was willing to undertake to pilot us over this unknown, untrodden, pathless country.

At the close of the first day, the guide and I being in advance, we came to a small, clear, bubbling brook, and he said: "Here we will encamp for the night." So, dismounting, I hitched my pony and went up the stream in quest of turkeys that I heard gobbling. I found them going to roost, and covetous of numbers, I would not shoot one and return as I should have done. I heard the party shouting for me. So, waiting till a number of turkeys were in the tree, I fired both barrels, and only two of the birds fell when I expected double that number. When I went to get the birds, alas! they were on an island and I had to leave them. It was now dark, and as I had crossed to the left bank of the stream I went on down until I supposed I was near the camp, and made a soft halloo! No answer. I then shouted louder and louder; then all was silence. I felt a peculiar crawling sensation running over me, and I think my hair objected to my wearing my hat. I took a survey of the situation. I was alone in an Indian country; it was very dark, and I must not pass over the trail where we crossed the stream. Aided with the light of matches and burning grass I discovered the trail and found my pony hitched where I left him.

Mounting him, I followed the trail. After a while I heard far away some one halloo. It was Crittenden returning for me. We met, and I reached camp in no pleasant mood. It was an experience I have only once since undergone, and the sensations of the mind when lost are bewildering.

It was the average estimate of the party that the number of deer that moved to the right and left of our trail was not less than twelve hundred, besides numerous antelope. Out of all this number we never killed one, for we had no rifle, and they would walk off or keep provokingly just out of gunshot. We killed all the turkeys we wanted for food. In four days we reached San Antonio. There were but *four white families* living in the town at that date: Volney Howard, Tom Howard, our guide Campbell, and Mrs. Bradley. Lands were offered us at six cents per acre that commands now over a thousand dollars per acre, and the population is at present fifty thousand.

At the San Pedro Springs, the source of the San Antonio river, where the river in its strength gushes up from the earth, we found Col. Harney encamped with a squadron of dragoons. He had built an observatory from which to obtain a view of the surrounding country. From the top hundreds of deer could be seen quietly grazing on the prairies near by.<sup>7</sup>

Wild hogs and large wolves infested the chaparral around the hills, and were caught in traps. The country is beautiful to the eye, and the city sleeps in what may be termed a valley, by reason of the low hills on the north and east. To the west the plain extends to the Medina river. Western Texas in the months of March and April is lovely beyond comparison. The green grass is hidden beneath flowers of every color; not flowers here and there, but one unbroken mass, presenting a richness of coloring beyond the art of man; as we ride along there are acres of solid blue, then of white, now of yellow, then pink and purple; then all mixed up of every hue, as I once saw petunias on the lawn at Capo di Monti, in Naples.

My stay in San Antonio depended on the departure of the train. There were a number of army officers waiting the convenience and protection of the wagons. The evening of our departure was notable for an incident illustrating the power of imagination over bodily feeling. Most of the officers had arrived at the camping ground in advance of the wagons, and were sitting under the trees when they came. As the train was passing by Crittenden got up and took from his pocket what was called a pepper box pistol and fired at a tree in a line parallel to the road. Just at that time Lieut. Lafayette McLaws left the train to come where we were, and shouted: "Quit firing, I am shot." As he was not in range, no one regarded what he said, and Crittenden kept on firing the revolver.

When McLaws rode up he had a wild look, and the bosom of his shirt was red with blood. A ball hitting the tree had glanced off at an angle and struck him. He was taken from his horse and the wound examined. There was the hole where the bullet entered the breast, and he was spitting

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<sup>7</sup> Col. Harney was annoyed by the number of blackbirds that would feed with the horses, eating the grain; so while the horses were out grazing I asked an officer for a gun to kill some of the birds. He handed me a long single-barreled one with a bore about the size of a half dollar. From the powder flask I put in two charges of powder and shot. The ground was covered with birds. I fired and killed none; the charge was too small. The doctor (I think he was a doctor) said he would load it for me, so I took another shot. This time I thought my arm dislocated at the shoulder. I did not count the number of birds, but the ground was covered with the dead and wounded. I played indifference while meditating revenge for a sore shoulder. Going to the top of the observatory, I saw perhaps a hundred deer grazing close by; so I was taken with a desire to kill one, and again asked the doctor for his gun. He proposed loading it for me. I told him I preferred doing it myself. I put in three charges of powder, or three drams, and about forty small buckshot, and off I went for a deer. The herd grazed along before me up the slope of a ridge, and passed over it. I crawled on hands and knees to the crest, and such a sight! A number of single deer were within twenty yards of me. At once I became covetous. Shoot a single deer? No. I wanted four or five (remembering "all things come to those who wait"), so presently five or six were nearly in a line, but more distant; and when I pulled the trigger the gun said "fush," and the smoke came in my face. As I looked over the field I was amazed. There were all the deer standing facing me, their heads high, ears spread out wide, and their large, soft, mild eyes looking at me imploringly; and not alarmed. Probably they had never heard a gun (and I am quite sure they did not hear this one), for the Indians then were armed only with bows and arrows. I sat down on the green grass and looked at the deer, and felt that experience must be a good teacher. But the days came when I did kill many; but the first one fell dead from a shot from my pistol. I make mention of these little events that belong to the past to show how great is the change made in a few passing years. Where now is all this game, and where are the Indians? Alike they have disappeared before the advance of avaricious civilization. From San Antonio to Corpus Christi and to El Paso the country was as God made it, unchanged by Indians, and over the plains and on a thousand hills roamed deer, wild turkey, partridges, and the waters swarmed with swan, geese, and ducks unmolested by sportsmen.

blood; and no surgeon being present he was put in a wagon to be taken back to San Antonio. He was resting on his back on straw and I was by his side. Again he spit some blood. He said: "My days are numbered. My whole chest is filled with blood, and I can feel the blood shaking inside as though I were filled with water." He was satisfied that he would soon die from internal hemorrhage; and perhaps he would, but fortunately it was discovered that the ball had also *hit his index finger*, that he had unknowingly sucked it in his mouth, and this was the blood he was spitting up. I therefore got out the wagon and left him. On arrival in San Antonio the wound was probed by a surgeon and the ball discovered near the spine. It was a glancing shot that pressing against the skin followed the line of least resistance until arrested by the spine. He soon recovered and came back to Corpus Christi.

On the way back, when we struck the Nueces river we discovered that the timber was a *turkey roost*. As the train was going only three miles farther on to camp, a young man, son of Col. McIntosh, and I agreed to remain there until dark and kill some turkeys. McIntosh selected a tree under the bank near the river; I fastened my pony to a bush on the plain and sat under the bank in the woods on the second bottom. About sunset great flocks of turkeys began to appear until the plains were alive with them. They were disturbed by my pony being tied there. As it grew dark they came into the trees or woods, flock after flock, in such numbers that they bent the limbs and fell to the ground all around me. I made seven shots, shooting only at the head as they were so near me. I picked up six fine gobblers (I would shoot no hens), and, staggering under the load, reached my pony. I threw the turkeys down and mounting my pony rode to McIntosh. McIntosh had fired both barrels, and had one turkey. He had stopped without any other ammunition. Accompanying me back to where my game was, we tied the turkeys and put them over the necks of our horses and went into camp. I have no doubt that more than a thousand turkeys flew into that timber to roost; they were on the ground all around me, and they could have been killed with a walking stick. I do not believe they had ever heard a gun fired before. By the stupidity of not protecting game by proper laws it has all disappeared long since. Indians obtained rifles and ammunition from traders, and the deer were killed solely for their skins; and the wild members of the Legislature looked on and said: "Let the boys hunt whenever they please; the country and all it contains belongs to them." It is now justly held that all game belongs to the State and becomes the property of the individual only as permitted by law, and after it is killed.

## CHAPTER IV

President of Mexico Resigns, and Paredes Is Elected – Mexican Troops Concentrating at Matamoras – Taylor Marches to the Rio Grande – Rattlesnakes – Mirage – Wild Horses – Taylor Concentrates His Troops at Arroyo, Colo. – Bull Fight – Mexicans Flee – Taylor Goes to Point Isabel – Join Gen. Worth – Field Works – Arrival of Gen. Ampudia – Orders Taylor to Leave – Taylor Declines – Col. Cross Murdered – Lieut. Porter Killed – Gen. Arista Arrives – Declares Hostilities Commenced – Capts. Thornton and Hardee Captured.

During the winter the friendly Mexicans who came to the camp would tell us of the preparations their government was making for war.

At the close of December, 1845, Herrera was forced to resign the presidency of Mexico, and Paredes was elected in his place; and detachments of troops began to move north, concentrating at Matamoras, on the Rio Grande, and the aspect of affairs looked quite belligerent. On the 22d of February, 1846, a depot of supplies was established by our troops at Santa Gertrudes, some forty miles in advance on the route to Matamoras. On the 7th of March the tents of our company were struck preparatory to a move, and the day following the line of march for the Rio Grande commenced.

The advance troops were a brigade of cavalry and Ringgold's battery of horse artillery. To be more minute, the order of march was: a company of cavalry, then our battery, then the main body of cavalry. As you can get all important matters from history, I shall allude only to what history generally omits, and relate minor affairs or scenes behind history, like that unknown behind the stage. The first night out we encamped at a beautiful place covered with blue flowers like the hyacinth. It was pleasant to look at, an enchanting scene that would have been drowsy and dreamlike from the fragrance of the flowers had we not discovered nearly every man grazing his horse carrying a small pole with which he was killing rattlesnakes. That night I slept on the ground and dreamed a great centipede was crawling over me, and I awoke with a great scream, like Dudu, from her sleep.

We had breakfast at daylight, and while we were sitting by the camp fire waiting for the bugle to call, and watching the wild geese flying around overhead bewildered by the fires, I held my gun pointing at them, and by some mishap it went off and alarmed the camp; but a goose fell down, nevertheless, near me. The guide, Pedro, said we had sixteen miles to march that day to the next camp. Our line was diverging somewhat inland from the gulf shore, and all the prairie was one green carpet of grass and flowers as far as the eye could reach, when all at once there was a great ocean on our left and not far distant. Officers galloped to Pedro to learn what was the matter, and ere an explanation was had the *mirage* was gone, the ocean was gone, and we were on the lone prairie as before.

The third day we were marching quietly along when an alarm was sounded. To our right and a little to the rear in the horizon was what appeared to be a column of cavalry bearing down on us. As it came nearer and nearer the cry arose: "Wild horses, wild horses!" Our battery was closed up, the advanced company of cavalry moved on, leaving a large opening; the dragoons massed, making an interval for the herd to pass through. On and on they came and, at full speed, with their long flowing manes and tails, passed through the open space made by the battery and dragoons. There were between two and three hundred. As soon as they passed Capt. May, Lieut. Ridgely, and some other officers were after them on their fine horses with lariat in hand, and after a ride of a mile or more came back each with a young colt. They stayed with our horses several days and then disappeared. When we encamped a pony that I had bought for my servant to ride was bitten on the face by a rattlesnake near the door of our tent. The animal was treated with ammonia and whisky. The next morning his head was so swollen that I left him behind. A servant of the paymaster, when the infantry came along, found the pony and brought it on to the Rio Grande and returned it to my boy.

The infantry marched by brigades at a day's interval. The officers and men being in uniform, wearing caps, had their lips and noses nearly raw from the sun and winds, and could not put a cup of coffee to their lips until it was cold. I wore an immense sombrero, or Mexican straw hat. On the route I was often told: "When Gen. Taylor comes up you will be put in arrest for wearing that hat." The army concentrated near the Arroyo Colorado, where the general commanding overtook us. I went over to call on him the next morning, and found him in front of his tent sitting on a camp stool eating breakfast. His table was the lid of the mess chest. His nose was white from the peeling off of the skin, and his lips raw. As I came up he saluted me with: "Good morning, lieutenant, good morning; sensible man to wear a hat." So I was commended instead of being censured for making myself comfortable. His coffee was in a tin cup, and his lips so sore that the heat of the tin was painful.

A day or so after this the advance pickets encountered a herd of wild cattle that all ran away except an old bull that showed fight. Hearing shots in advance I galloped on and found four or five cavalymen around this animal, that looked as if he might be the grandsire of the herd. Every shot fired from the carbines had failed to penetrate the skin. I was armed with my shotgun and a brace of old pistols made in Marseilles, France, that Lieut. U. S. Grant gave me to carry along for him. I fired both these pistols at the enraged animal, and the balls only made the skin red by removing the hair. We now persuaded a dragoon to put himself in front of the beast while I approached within twenty feet of his side, and from my gun fired a ball that penetrated the lungs. Still he pawed the earth and charged the horses, some of which were injured, and inspired new life to all around him while his own was ebbing. At last a dragoon dismounted, cautiously approached, shot him in the forehead, and the already weakened bull fell on his knees and rolled on his side – dead.

This fight was not conducted according to all the rules of the ring at Madrid. We had, however, a dozen picadors and a matadore, and they performed feats of valor without the approving smiles of black-eyed señoras or the applause of the grandees, which in Spain nerves the actors to daring deeds; but there was a compensation, for there were no hisses when one fled from the bull to save his horse, or sought a raking position in the rear to encourage those in front. The lesson I drew from this kind of recreation was that at the next bullfight I would be found among the spectators and not in the arena.

This continued firing by the advance guard caused troops to hasten to the front to ascertain the reason of the tumult, and when it was reported to Gen. Taylor that according to the rules of Texas, Mexico, and Spain a bull had been found, an amphitheater marked out, and that a real bull fight had taken place; that the noble animal had been slain for amusement, and that his cavalry was not well trained and had been tossed by the bull, he grew irate, and alas! to spoil our little game of recreations away in front, caused an order to be issued forbidding all firing on the march, unless necessitated by the presence of the enemy. Henceforth the bulls, deer, and jack rabbits became friendly with us, and we passed them by in silence.

Nearly every day small armed parties of Mexicans were seen away in advance, and once when we rode to a small pond to water our horses we found a party of Mexican lancers watering theirs also. A few words of salutation passed, when they moved on and disappeared. Once they set the prairie on fire, and we had to drive through the leaping flames with our guns and caissons filled with ammunition.

On the 19th the head of the column was halted and went into camp about three or four miles off the stream called Arroyo Colorado, to wait the arrival or concentration of all the troops, about four thousand in number, and preparation to cross was made by the engineers. On the morning of the 20th, our battery was put in position on the banks of the river where the earth had been cut down for it to cross, and where its fire could command the opposite shore and cover the landing of the infantry. Notice had been given the engineer officer by the Mexicans that the forces on the Mexican shore were under positive orders to fire on any of our troops attempting to cross. Again a like notice was sent to Gen. Taylor, and a proclamation that had been issued by Gen. Mejia a day or two past was handed to him. During this time an awful din was made on the Mexican side by bugle

calls away down, and far up the river, and kettledrums and fife in the woods in front. Our guns were loaded and matches lit when the old General gave the command for the infantry to cross. The head of the columns plunged into the water, holding their cartridge boxes and muskets high, and, landing, deployed at once right and left. Other troops crossed above on the right, and when all moved forward not a Mexican was seen.

On the 24th we arrived at a point on the main road running from Point Isabel to Matamoras which was ten miles from Point Isabel and a like distance from Matamoras. Gen. Worth was directed to move on toward the Rio Grande near Matamoras with the infantry, while Gen. Taylor, with our battery and the dragoons, went down to meet Maj. Munroe at Point Isabel, where he had established a depot of supplies for the army. On the 26th Gen. Taylor, with his escort of cavalry and artillery, joined the main body under Worth, and on the 28th the army encamped on the river bank opposite Matamoras.

The arrival of Gen. Taylor with his army, quietly taking the position he did, no doubt produced some consternation. Mexican infantry was seen in motion in the city. They had the river picketed and batteries placed to bear on our camp.

The Mexican commander insisted that all was lovely, and that there was no war; that the acts of hostility were little events – little incidents – to make our arrival interesting and pleasant. That the Consul for the United States in Matamoras was free, and a gentleman of leisure, but that Gen. Taylor could not interview him without permission from the Commandante.

Notwithstanding "the distinguished consideration" and affectionate regard expressed in the communications for the Americanos, Gen. Taylor concluded to put up some field works or fortifications out of courtesy to those being constructed by the Mexicans. We were in the land of Moab, and the promised land was on the other side. There was the city embowered in green foliage, with tropical plants around the white houses, and there, when the sun was declining, would assemble the female population to see and to be seen, and listen to the music of the various bands. "Dixie" was not then born, the "Bonnie Blue Flag" had not then been waved; and we played "Yankee Doodle" because it made a loud noise, the "Star-Spangled Banner" because it waved over us, "Hail, Columbia" because it was inspiring, and the sweetest airs from the operas for the beautiful señoritas with the rebosas that disclosed the sweet faces they were designed to hide. The music from the other side I cannot recall now, only it rose with a "voluptuous swell" that floated over the water and died away softly in the distance with the breath that made it. And all the while on our side the shore was lined with officers and soldiers enjoying the scene before them – that had a short existence.

"Ampudia has come! Ampudia has come!" was heralded by every Mexican that came into our camp vending the products of the farms. And so it was. He came clothed in modesty, and made a display of it immediately by sending a dispatch on the 12th ordering Gen. Taylor to get out of his camp in twenty-four hours, and not to stop on this side of the Nueces. I do not believe Taylor was much acquainted with fear, because, instead of "folding his tents like the Arabs, and silently stealing away," he had the audacity to remain just where he was until the twenty-four hours had expired, and long after.

About this time Col. Cross, of the quartermaster's department, was murdered by some one and his body thrown in the chaparral. I was with a party of officers that was riding up the river, not expressly in search of Col. Cross's body, some seven or eight days after he was missed, and we observed some vultures resting in an old tree top. I rode in toward them, and saw a blue coat on the ground. It was Col. Cross's, and some of his remains were there. They were afterwards gathered up and cared for properly. One of the parties, a detachment of dragoons, sent in search of Cross's body got into a fight with the Mexicans and Lieut. Porter was killed; and yet there was no war?

And now a greater than Ampudia had arrived, and on the 24th of April Gen. Arista assumed command of the Mexican army now encamped in and around the city, and he informed Taylor that he considered hostilities commenced, and had "let slip the dogs of war." The enemy was now reported



to have crossed to our side in large numbers, and parties were sent out to make reconnoissances, one of which was captured by the Mexicans; and Capts. Thornton and Hardee were now prisoners of war.

## CHAPTER V

Arista and His Cavalry – United States Excited – Two Hundred Thousand Men Offer Their Services – Congress Declares "War Existed by the Acts of the Mexican Republic" – Taylor Marches to Point Isabel – Bombardment of Fort Brown – Capts. May and Walker – Taylor Marches for Matamoras – Battle of Palo Alto – Victory – Arista Falls Back to Resaca – Battle of Resaca – Capture of Enemies' Batteries – Capts. May and Ridgely – Gen. La Vega Captured – His Sword Presented to Taylor – Duncan and Ridgely Pursue the Enemy – I Capture La Vega's Aid – Col. McIntosh – Ride over the Field of Palo Alto – Death of Lieuts. Chadburne and Stevens – We take possession of Matamoras – Gen. Twiggs appointed Governor – Twiggs and Jesus Maria – Arrival of Gens. W. O. Butler, Robert Patterson, Pillow, and others – Promoted to Second Lieutenant – Officers of the Company – March to Camargo – Thence to Monterey – Seralvo – Arrival at Monterey.

And now Arista, on the part of the Mexican government, having declared that war existed; and some of our forces, both men and officers, having been killed or captured, the pony express carried this news to the city of New Orleans; and as there was no telegraph, it spread all over the country and became magnified like "the three black crows." The apprehension that we were cut off from communicating with home by Arista's army occupying a position between us and Point Isabel was widespread, and impromptu meetings held for volunteers to go to the relief of our army, and thousands responded to the call. Congress was in session, and it promptly declared that "war existed by the acts of the Mexican Republic," and authorized the President to accept into service fifty thousand volunteers. As over two hundred thousand men offered their services, it may be, as Mark Twain once observed, that many persons "persuaded their wives' relations" to avail themselves of this unique occasion to visit the land of the Aztecs, and enjoy balmy breezes under the shade of the acacia, the bamboo, and the pomegranate, with transportation free. In the meantime we were in blissful ignorance that we were in such danger, and did not know it until our friends came to our relief.

When Arista landed a part of his force on our side of the river, it was put in the field under the command of Gen. Torrejon, and, being cavalry, had gained possession of the road leading to Point Isabel, thus cutting off all the creature comforts that we daily enjoyed. If it did not affect our pockets, it curtailed the duties of our *chef de cuisine*, and diminished the pleasures of the table. In plain English, rations were getting short, and the less we had to eat the harder we worked on the fort and other defenses.

May Day, when our friends were inhaling the fragrance of the bloom of the peach and cherry, the rose and the violet, and children were dancing around the maypole, we were striking our tents, packing up "traps," burning letters, preparatory to leaving for Point Isabel. A mocking bird that would sit on the ridgepole of my tent and sing to me daily, and warble sweet notes by moonlight, now sat on the fence adjoining and sung a parting song, for I never saw him again, and it filled my heart with sadness. Sing on, dear bird; I hear thee now!

The Seventh Regiment of Infantry, Bragg's company, or battery, and a company of foot artillery were left in the fort under Maj. Brown, and Gen. Taylor started for Point Isabel, where our supplies were in store. The day following we arrived, and I was delighted to see old ocean again. Our departure should not have been made an occasion for sensible persons to rejoice, for did we not trust about six hundred men to entertain the Mexicans during our absence? and thus notify them that we purposed to return, and did we not do so?

"And I have loved thee, ocean," and I love thee still, and I was content to hear thy voice again and be near thee; but life is a dream, and from that dream I was awakened at dawn on the morning of the

3d. I was sleeping on the ground. A dull distant sound broke on my ear. I rested my head on my elbow, and heard nothing; putting my ear again to the earth, I heard the boom! boom! of distant cannon. It was heard by others, and soon the camp was astir. It was now certain from the continuous sounds that Fort Brown was being bombarded. Gen. Taylor sent out Capts. May and Walker to communicate with Maj. Brown, and Walker succeeded in getting into the fort and returning. The defense of Point Isabel was to be intrusted to Maj. Munroe, assisted by the navy in command of Commodore Connor; and the army, now reduced to two thousand four hundred men, was to move to the relief of the garrison in Fort Brown.

About noon on the 7th this little force started to meet Arista, who was between us and Fort Brown, without a question or doubt of getting there, although it was known the enemy's force numbered about eight thousand men. It was near noon on the 8th of May when far away over the broad prairie, dimly outlined, was seen a dark line directly in front of us. It was the Mexican army drawn up in battle array across our road to Matamoras. When we arrived where there was water Gen. Taylor halted to give the men time to fill their canteens and to have a little rest.

Soon the long roll sounded, hearts beat, pulses kept time, and knees trembled and would not be still. Our line was formed as follows: the fifth infantry (Col. McIntosh), Ringgold's battery, third infantry, two long, heavy iron eighteen pounders, fourth infantry, and two squadrons of dragoons posted on our right, all commanded by Col. Twiggs, formed the right wing; the left was a battalion of foot artillery, Duncan's battery, and eighth infantry. In some respects it was a laughable thing to see the deployment of our line, of which the Mexicans were quiet spectators. Looking back from where we came into battery, which was executed in a half minute and in advance of the infantry, I could see the two great, long, heavy iron eighteen pounders, and the white-topped ammunition wagons lumbering along to get into line, drawn by a team of twenty oxen each. They came into line by words of command not laid down in the work on tactics; they described a great semicircle at the commands, "Haw, Buck! haw, Brindle! whoa, Brandy!" and finally got their muzzles pointed to the front. If we had had elephants in place of the oxen, it would have been more picturesque, and presented a fine panorama.

Arista must have thought he had performed his whole duty when he barred the road with his troops to prevent Taylor from advancing. He had been in line of battle all the morning awaiting our coming, yet he *permitted us to deploy undisturbed*, although we were in easy range of his guns, instead of assuming the offensive as he should have done. With a courtesy becoming a knight of the Middle Ages he permitted Lieut. Blake, in the presence of the armies, to ride down to within musket shot of his line, to dismount and survey his troops through his glass, then to remount and ride along down his front without allowing a shot to be fired at him. As this reconnoissance had unmasked his artillery, he ran his guns to the front, and the artillery on both sides commenced firing. My rank assigned me to the duty of sitting on my horse to look at the fight and watch the caissons. Presently a small shell came along and struck the driver of the lead horses. The shell entered his body after carrying away the pommel of his saddle, and exploded the moment it left his body, as fragments of it wounded his horse in the hip, split the lip and tongue, and knocked out some teeth of a second horse and broke the jaw of Lieut. Ridgely's blooded mare. That was the first man I saw killed in battle. It was war, but it was not pleasant, and I thought it was no place for me to sit on my horse idle; so, dismounting, I gave my horse to a horse holder, and walked to the howitzer on the right, took command of it, and helped work it. As no one demurred at what I was doing, I remained in charge of it all day. I would prefer to take my rod and line and go fishing, even if I got only a nibble, than to sit still on a horse offering myself as a target for cannon balls. To have a hand in the fray is quite another matter.

I shall not describe this battle. It was almost and altogether an artillery fight. Once the Mexican cavalry with two pieces of artillery under Torrajon made a detour to our right with a view of turning it, or capturing our wagon train. This movement was defeated by the Fifth Infantry and two pieces of artillery being sent to meet it. The infantry formed in square, and when the Mexican cannon were

being loaded to fire on the square, Ridgely and I came up, and so *quickly* did we bring our guns into action that we unlimbered, loaded, and fired before the Mexicans could; in fact they did not fire a cannon shot, but retreated *slowly* back whence they came. Why they moved so doggedly slow under fire I could not tell; perhaps it was Mexican pride. Not long after this Maj. Ringgold, while sitting on his horse, was struck with a cannon shot, from the effects of which he died. Maj. Ringgold was an accomplished officer and an elegant gentleman, and his loss was a source of universal regret. Lieut. Ridgely succeeded to the command of the battery. The firing ceased about dusk. Our loss was only ten killed and forty-four wounded. Arista stated that his loss was two hundred and fifty-three. They turned their guns on our batteries; we fired at their infantry as instructed. During the night Arista fell back to a strong position on the banks of a dry bed of a stream about thirty yards wide called Resaca de la Palma. It runs through a wood with a dense undergrowth of chaparral, the woods on either side being perhaps a mile wide. From the prairie on which the battle of Palo Alto had been fought the road enters the woods that border the Resaca, crosses it, and leads on to Matamoras.

Early on the morning of the 9th Taylor sent Capt. McCall with about two hundred men in advance to discover the position of the enemy. He found them in force at Resaca, returned, and so reported to the general commanding.

There have been men who *create occasions* and avail themselves of the circumstances arising therefrom; but man generally is the creature of circumstance, and I mention this because it has an application to persons who were engaged in this day's battle. From Gen. Taylor down no one in this army had had much practical experience in the *art* of war, and from practice knew but little of the peculiar province of each arm of the service.

Because the artillery rendered such signal service on the field yesterday Gen. Taylor was impressed with the idea that it was available for pursuit of cavalry in mountain passes, for storming entrenchments, or charging a line of battle. Having discovered the position of the enemy, the General had the trains parked on the prairie and left in charge of a battalion of foot artillery and the two eighteen pounders. May's dragoons were held in reserve on the prairie near where the road enters the woods.

These arrangements completed, our battery, now under the command of Ridgely, was ordered to advance, take the road through the woods and chaparral, and attack the enemy. Here then was the singular tactics of a battery of horse artillery all alone, leaving the entire army behind, moving down the road through the woods without any support whatever. Capt. Walker was our guide. He and I and Ridgely were in advance. We had gone half a mile or more when crash through the tree tops came a shot from the unseen batteries in front. "At a gallop, march," was the order, and on we went until the road turned to the left about forty-five degrees. At the turn we halted, and this gave us a battery front (in part) to their guns near the bank of the dry river. We could not see their guns, nor they see ours, owing to undergrowth, but the guns were discharged at the smoke that each other made. We kept advancing "by hand" down the road. Their skirmishers now began to annoy us. Ridgely came to me and said: "Go to Gen. Taylor and ask him to send some infantry supports." I got on my horse and galloped back up the road at full speed, met Gen. Taylor, Maj. Bliss, and other staff officers in the road, and delivered the message. The reply was: "The infantry has been deployed and will soon be there." I returned at a run. No one was to be seen anywhere. We had now been fighting the enemy's guns alone for more than a half hour, and had driven them from off the plain into the ravine or dry bed of the river, and had obtained possession of an open camping ground directly in front of their pieces and not over a hundred yards distant. Again Ridgely came and said: "Go to Gen. Taylor as quick as possible, and tell him to *send me* assistance to capture the Mexican batteries in front of us." The road and also the woods on both sides were now full of our infantry moving forward. I soon met Gen. Taylor, delivered the message, adding: "General, their guns are just in our front and can be

taken." His only answer was: "*My! my! G – d, where is May? I can't get him up!*"<sup>8</sup> Nothing more was said, and I returned. By this time our infantry was engaged with the enemy on the right of the road. The firing was very heavy. I had been back with my gun about ten minutes, when down the road came May, in column of fours; he halted and exclaimed: "Hello! Ridgely, where is that battery? I am ordered to charge it." Ridgely said: "Hold on, Charley, till I draw their fire, and you will soon see where they are." Our guns fired, and theirs replied. Away went May toward the Mexican guns, and our guns after him at a run. We came up to them muzzle to muzzle, only theirs were below the banks of the ravine and ours above. May had swept the gunners away and was out of sight on the other side in the chaparral. I was in command of the twelve-pound howitzer, and as I gave the order in battery, "Fire to the front!" a Mexican regiment behind some earthworks in the ravine and on the other side, with their right directly in front, fired a volley. Two drivers fell, the wheel locked the gun in turning, a horse fell, and it was with difficulty we could unlimber. I said to the sergeant, "Run for a canister," but before he got back a gunner slipped in a shell, and on top of that in went the canister. I could not prevent it, so great was the din of muskets. I fired the gun myself. The wheels were lifted from the ground. Two more canisters were fired before the regiment broke; but at that moment our infantry opened on them, and all was over in our immediate front. The second gun had horses killed, drivers and men shot, and it locked a wheel in the same way. Ridgely sprang from his horse and leaped into the dead driver's saddle, straightened the team, and that gun came into action. What the other two did I know not. Just as our firing ceased up rode Gen. Taylor with his staff, and complimented us. As he sat there on his horse May's men began to come back. A sergeant came up first and reported that he had captured Gen. La Vega; next an infantry officer came and reported La Vega was his prisoner; and then May returned and, riding up to Gen. Taylor, drew from a scabbard a sword. Taking it by the point, he presented it to the General with these words: "General, I have the honor to present to you the sword of Gen. La Vega. He is a prisoner." It was gracefully done. Taylor looked at it a moment and returned it to May. While we were all there in a group down the road came Duncan's battery and crossed the ravine. Ridgely could not stand that, and said to me: "French ask the General if we cannot cross over too." The reply was: "No, you have done enough to-day." Ridgely laughed, saying, "I can't receive orders from you;" and away he went with the guns after Duncan, leaving me to follow as soon as I repaired the damage to my gun. In a few minutes I crossed. No one halted me. I found Duncan firing away to the left and front, where it was reported troops were retreating. We soon moved on. At this time I saw a man hiding behind some bushes about twenty yards from the roadside. I went to him, and as my knowledge of Spanish had not been cultivated, I undertook to ask him his rank (seeing he was an officer), and tried to say to him: "*¿Teniente o capitán?*" It must have been badly pronounced, for he replied, "*Si, señor,*" and, suiting action to the word, he put his hand in his pocket and handed me a biscuit. At that moment up rode Dr. Barnes and Capt. Kerr, and Barnes exclaimed: "Great heavens! French asked this gentleman for bread." No doubt the officer, who was an aid to Gen. La Vega, understood me to say: "*¿Tiene usted pan?*" ("have you any bread?"). Barnes, who afterwards became surgeon general of the United States army, declared to the end I asked that gentleman for bread, and never failed to tell the story on me in company.

Well, on we went for over four miles to Fort Brown. What a welcome we received! They had heard the sound of battle on the 8th, and again on the 9th, and had seen the Mexicans crossing the river in great haste and confusion. Great was the commotion in Matamoras that night. Now when darkness came, Ridgely remembered that he had come on without orders – in fact, pretty nearly against orders – and he told me to ride back and see Gen. Taylor and ask for orders. So I rode back over the road alone. Gen. Taylor was glad to hear from the garrison; said Ridgely could remain on the Rio Grande until further orders. J. Bankhead Magruder<sup>9</sup> was at headquarters, and declared it was very imprudent

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<sup>8</sup> The inference is that Gen. Taylor ordered May up on the receipt of Ridgely's first message.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. John Bankhead Magruder was known in earlier days as "Prince John." When stationed on the Canadian frontier the British

for me to return by myself, and insisted that he should send me under the protection of an escort. I accepted two men, but as they were not mounted, the progress was too slow. I dismissed them and galloped back safely. Duncan, who was an ambitious man, was much disappointed that he never got sight of the enemy on the 9th; but it is true, history to the contrary notwithstanding.

You now have the true history of the circumstances that led May to be sent to charge that battery; it originated in the brain of Ridgely. Duncan, who was not in the action, was made a brevet major for Palo Alto, and lieutenant colonel for Resaca. Ridgely, who was distinguished for his gallant conduct in both battles, was rewarded only with a brevet captaincy, which he declined, for the two battles. Capt. May was, if I remember aright, rewarded with two brevets without any distinguished service, or special service at all in the first battle. There is nothing like blowing a horn and having friends at court. I mention this without any reflection on those two good soldiers, and reference is thus made to point out that true service and just merit does not always meet with its proper reward. Such is the way of the world.

The conduct of our troops in this battle was courageous in the extreme. Banners were captured by gallant old officers from the hands of the enemy and held aloft in the front during the conflict that was in some instances hand to hand. And yet the loss would not indicate such resistance, for our killed were only thirty-nine, and the wounded about eighty.<sup>10</sup> It certainly shows less stubborn resistance on the part of the Mexicans than was found in the civil war. Col. McIntosh was pinned to the earth with bayonets, one entering his mouth and passing through his neck; he was rescued, and lived only to give his life for his country at Molino del Rey. The day following was spent in burying the dead and caring for the wounded, and in an exchange of prisoners. Our battery, with some infantry, constituted an escort for the prisoners to Point Isabel. On the way there I rode over the field of Palo Alto. I saw a number of the dead that had not been buried. The flesh of the Americans was decayed and gone, or eaten by wolves and vultures; that of the Mexicans was dried and uncorrupted, which I attribute to the nature of their food, it being antiseptic. I observed this also at Monterey.

Again I was where I could see the wild waves of ocean play and come tumbling on the shore; but like most pleasures it was short, for we were soon on the march back to Fort Brown.

If we remember that Taylor had been given twenty-four hours, out of distinguished consideration for his character, to get away from before Matamoras, or take the consequences, and was so impolite in not obeying; and if we consider that when we did leave it was regarded as a flight;

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officers and ours were on good social terms. John was indeed a princely fellow, and the officers at his mess dined always in a rich, gay dinner jacket. His servant was Irish and a jewel, and knew well "Prince John's" foibles. One day at dinner, to which some English officers were guests, there was a considerable display of taste, and one of them had the temerity to ask his host what was the pay of a lieutenant of artillery, and obtained for an answer: "Well, bless you, my dear fellow, I do not remember; my servant always gets it. What is it, Patrick?" And Pat, well knowing the ways of Magruder, replied: "Your honor must perceive the captain is a gentleman, and too ginerous to ask me for it." When the city of Mexico was captured by Gen. Scott "Prince John" obtained quarters in the bishop's palace. Sending for the butler, he asked him: "At what hour does the bishop dine?" Answer: "Four P.M." "How many courses does he have?" Answer: "Four." "How many bottles of wine does he order?" Answer: "Two." To impress the butler that he was an officer of high dignity, he gave orders that he would dine at 8 P.M. and require eight courses and four bottles of wine, doubling the courses, etc. And here is another story I will relate as I heard it: After the battles around Richmond had been fought Gen. J. B. Magruder was sent to command the Department of Texas. As I have formerly related, he was a *bon vivant* and rejoiced in the pleasures of the table, and dined with much ceremony. To keep this up, as far as he could, he would send, like the popes of Rome, a courier in advance to arrange for his comfort. On one occasion a staff officer was sent ahead as usual. Coming to a good residence, he arranged for comfortable quarters and a sumptuous supper. When the General arrived and the usual preliminaries were over he was ushered into the dining hall, and there sat at the table a ragged "Reb" helping himself to the supper all alone. Magruder, however, took his seat at the table, and, eying the "Reb" demolishing the viands, he exclaimed: "Do you, sir, know with whom you are eating supper?" "Reb" replied: "No, I don't know, and I don't care a d – mn; before I went into the army I was very particular as to whom I ate with, but it makes no difference now; just help yourself, do."

<sup>10</sup> Riding over the battlefield the day after the fight we came to the camp where the surgeons were attending to the wounded. A German prisoner was there *standing up*, holding on to the limb of a tree resting himself, he had been shot crosswise in the rear, the ball tearing away the seat of his breeches, that were very bloody. One of our *Irish* soldiers was passing by with canteens filled with water, and the German asked for a drink. Pat surveyed him, and replied: "Never a drop of wather will ye get from me, ye bloody hathen. If ye had stayed in your own counthry, where you belong, ye would now be well and have a sound seat to sit down on."

and if we call to mind the rejoicings of the people that we had fled, we can in a measure realize the sudden change from high hopes to despondency, from expected joy to overwhelming sorrow when they saw their soldiers returning, not with captured flags and the spoils of war, not with waving banners and triumphant shouts of victory, but fleeing when no one pursued, and madly plunging into the river to gain the shore which they lately left with expectations not realized.

On the 10th we stood on our bank of the river, the other shore so near and yet so far! An army with no pontoon train! no bridge whereon to cross a deep, narrow river! Where was the great organizer that makes war successful? For one week the troops remained in front of the city unable to cross for the want of adequate means.

On the 18th, when the advanced squadron of dragoons was swimming across the river, Lieut. George Stevens was drowned. Balance such a man's life with the cost of a pontoon bridge! Two of my classmates, brave men, were now released from war. T. L. Chadbourn was killed at Resaca, and now Stevens drowned! both men dear to me. I saw poor Stevens then sink and rise no more.

"Beat the surges under him, and ride upon their back."

We crossed the river unmolested, and took possession of the town. Gen. Twiggs was appointed governor of the place, and under his police system perfect order was maintained. Many pleasant families remained and to some of us a cordial welcome was given at all times.

My time was passed pleasantly in the city during the months of June, July, and part of August. Our battery was in camp near the headquarters of Gen. Twiggs. A path leading to the city passed close in front of his office tent, and many persons went to and fro.

One day I was sitting with the General. It was a beautiful afternoon. We were under the shade of some trees, and soldiers and strangers passing by so near would salute or otherwise recognize the General. However, at this time a Mexican came along with a tall sombrero on his head and passed without noticing the General. He was hailed by the General, came back, and was asked: "What is your name?" He took off his sombrero politely, and answered: "Jesus Maria." Twiggs raised both hands above his head and exclaimed: "Go away! go away from me! go away!" and the surprised Mexican passed on. I inferred from the great excitement the General exhibited at the name of the Mexican that his ancestors may have worshiped in the Temple of Jerusalem, or fought with the Maccabees in defense of their religion.

Whilst the forces under Taylor were resting in camp at Matamoras, the quartermaster's department was busy in procuring light-draft boats to navigate the Rio Grande, it having been determined to establish a depot of supplies at Camargo, a town on the river nearly a hundred miles above Matamoras, preparatory to an advance on Monterey.

Under the act calling for volunteers there were appointed to command them two major generals, W. O. Butler, of Kentucky, and Robert Patterson, of Pennsylvania; and G. J. Pillow, of Tennessee, T. L. Hamer, of Ohio, John A. Quitman, of Mississippi, Thomas Marshall, of Kentucky, Joseph Lane, of Indiana, James Shields, of Illinois, were commissioned brigadier generals, and men to the number of near six thousand were, as volunteers, added to Taylor's force, increasing it to nine thousand.

This force was organized into three divisions: the first under Gen. Twiggs, the second under Gen. Worth, and the third under Gen. W. O. Butler, who was with Gen. Jackson at New Orleans when he defeated the English under Pakenham. Nearly fifty years after, another Butler, Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, figured at New Orleans, and I would not that you mistake them, for they were one to the other as "Hyperion to a satyr."

In June I was promoted to the high rank of second lieutenant of the Third Artillery, and sometime during the summer was assigned to Bragg's company of artillery, whose lieutenants were George H. Thomas, John F. Reynolds, and myself. They were all agreeable officers, but even to this day I recall, like a woman, my first loves, Ringgold, Ridgely, and Shover.

Early in August the first division started for Camargo. It was an uninteresting march, hot and dusty beyond conception. By the middle of August the forces started for Monterey. We now left the alluvial lands of the Rio Grande, and the country was free from dust. From Seralvo we obtained the first view of the lofty peaks of the Sierra Madre range of mountains, seventy odd miles distant, and they created much discussion as to whether they were mountains or clouds. From Seralvo to Monterey the country was beautiful, rich, and fertile. We passed groves of ebony, Brazil wood, oak, pecan, mesquite, etc. The fields of corn were in silk, melons and vegetables of every variety were ripe; and later on in the season we had oranges, lemons, limes, pomegranates, bananas, and grapes.

One morning when we were between Seralvo and Marin I received an order to remain and assist Lieut. D. B. Sacket in having the mule train loaded. I thought it strange that an artillery officer should be put on that duty, and felt indignant; but I was repaid in a measure by what took place, for I sometimes enjoy a little "fun." After the muleteers had packed the old trained mules and started them one after another on their way, there remained a number of wild mules to have their packs put on, I believe for the first time. One was lassoed and thrown and the pack saddle put on. Then, for his load, two barrels of crackers were securely put on. All being ready, the blind was removed from his eyes. He looked slowly around, showed the white of his eyes, took one step, humped himself, and kicked so high that the load overbalanced him and he fell on his back unable to rise, and brayed aloud. Soon a blind was removed from another; he surveyed the load from right to left with rolling eyes, squatted low, humped himself, sprang forward, stood on his forefeet and commenced high kicking, exploded the barrels of "hardtack" with his heels, threw the biscuit in the air with the force of a dynamite bomb, and ran away with the empty barrels dangling behind, as badly scared as a dog with tin buckets tied to his tail. A third, when his blind was removed, stepped lightly to the front, but casting his eyes on either side, made a loud bray, closed down his tail, and disappeared through the chaparral as quick as a jack rabbit, followed with loud Mexican denunciations that I cannot translate. In this manner four or five cargoes were lost, and the pack train moved on. I was sorry for the poor Mexicans, but I could not but laugh at the mules. My duty ended when the train started; so leaving it in the charge of Lieut. Sacket with his dragoons, I rode on alone and did not overtake my company until it had encamped.

We arrived at Monterey on the 19th. The dragoons and the two batteries of field artillery encamped with Gen. Taylor at his headquarters at Walnut Springs, three miles from the city.



## CHAPTER VI

Monterey – Population – Gen. Ampudia – Gen. Worth – Capture a Fort – Battery in a Hot Place – Bragg's Order Countermanded – Two Long-Haired Texans – Capture the Bishop's Palace – Our Battery Ordered to the East End of the City – Gens. Taylor and Quitman – Street Fighting – Gen. Ampudia Surrenders – Gen. Worth, Gov. Henderson, and Col. Jefferson Davis Commissioners – Enter the City – Dine with a Mexican Gentleman – Death of Ridgely – Hot Springs – Santa Anna President – Victoria Surrenders – Gen. Scott – Vera Cruz – Return to Monterey – Death of Lieut. Richey – Investigation of Richey's Death – Monterey – Saltillo – Agua Nueva – Gen. Wool – Santa Anna Advances – Maj. Borland and Gaines Captured – Taylor Falls Back to Buena Vista – Mexican Army – Am Wounded – The Hacienda – Cavalry Fight with Mexican Lancers – Flag of Truce – Victory – Carried to Saltillo.

Monterey, an old city, the capital of the State of Nuevo Leon, contained about forty thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the left bank of the San Juan, a small stream that empties into a larger one of the same name.

It had three forts. The main one, called the Black Fort, was out on the plain north of the city. Fort Tanaria was in the suburbs, in the northeast part of the city; and about two hundred yards distant south of it was a third fort, the guns of which commanded the interior of the Tanaria. The hill on the slope of which was the bishop's palace was also fortified; and strong earthworks surrounded the city on the north and east sides, with isolated works to the south and west.

Gen. Ampudia was in command, with a force of seven thousand regular troops, and a large volunteer force. A reconnoissance of the place by the engineer officers, having been completed, dispositions to capture the city were made by detaching Gen. Worth, with his division, and Col. Hays, with his Texas regiment, to gain the road to Saltillo, by storming its defenses, and thereby cutting off the supplies of the enemy and holding his line of retreat. To accomplish this part of Gen. Taylor's plan, Worth started late on the 20th, and on the 21st made the attack, and was successful in carrying the detached works and securing the road to Saltillo. By way of *divertisement*, or at most a diversion in favor of Worth, Gen. Taylor moved Garland's division of regulars and a division of volunteers, some cavalry, and our battery, down to the northeast part of the city. As is often the case, this demonstration terminated in a fight, and the capture of the fort or redoubt called Tanaria and buildings adjacent. Our battery penetrated by a street some distance into the city. The houses were mainly built of soft stone or adobe, and the shot from the batteries in the town passed through the buildings, covering the men, horses, and guns with lime and dust, blinding us so that we could see nothing. From this situation we were ordered out. In passing an opening in the works a shot killed the two wheel horses to one of the caissons, and Lieut. Reynolds and I with the men threw, or pushed, the horses and harness into the ditches on either side, and after we had done this and gone some distance, another shot passed through two horses of one of the guns. These horses were loosed, and with their entrails dragging, in agony of pain, I suppose, commenced eating the grass.

Having gotten out, Bragg ordered me back alone to the ditch in the edge of the town to save the harness that was on the horses. I met Gen. Taylor, who inquired where I was going. When told, he said, "That is nonsense," and ordered me to go to camp, where the battery had been sent. My ride back was rather exciting. For the distance of a half mile or more I was on the plain in open sight of the Black Fort, or the citadel. The gunners must have become quite vindictive, for they opened fire on me, a lone horseman. I had to watch the smoke of each gun, check my horse, and as the shot would cross ahead push on, stopping to allow each shot to pass in front. I think the smoke prevented

the gunners from discovering that I halted at every discharge of a gun. At any rate, every shot passed in front of me. I never forgave Bragg for that picayune order, and it was supplemented on the 23d by another equally as wild. As we were withdrawing from the city, we had to go up a straight road leading from a four-gun battery. A shot struck a driver on the elbow, carrying away his forearm. He fell *dead* from his horse, singular but true, and Bragg directed me to dismount and take off the man's sword. I did so; and took from his pocket a knife, for I thought I might be sent back if I did not save that too. I presented the sword to Bragg, and desired him to take charge of the knife, but he declined, as it was not *public* property. I write down these little things, for they give instances of the observance of details, characteristic of this officer, not obtained from history.

The day following, the 22d, our battery was ordered to occupy, in reserve, a depression in a plain north of the citadel. But they knew we were there, and searched for us with shot. As I have observed already, the garrison of the citadel was vindictive, and fired at any one in sight and range. Sure enough, soon two long-haired Texans, on ponies, rode down and halted near each other, on the plain, and we watched events. Bang! went one of the heavy guns in the citadel; the ball passed over us and went between the two Texans. One wheeled his horse back for camp, and the other galloped down to our guns and remarked: "Them darned fool Mexicans shoot mighty wild; they came near hitting me." He thought the shot was directed at us, and not at him.

But, to return to more important proceedings. Behold, now a glorious sight!

To the northwest of Monterey, and in the suburbs of the city, there is a very high hill called Independencia, that swells abruptly from the plain, except on the southern slope, which is more gentle. On this slope, about halfway up, there is a massy palace, known as the bishop's palace. It was fortified and garrisoned, and the summit was crowned with a fort. The capture of this hill was necessary because it commanded the Saltillo road and prevented Gen. Worth from entering the city. As I have observed, our battery was put in reserve, and we were in open sight of the hill Independencia.

Early in the morning when the fog rose, the battery on Independencia hill opened, and a solitary gun responded from a distant one, which our troops had captured the day previous. And now the base of Independencia hill was encircled in smoke, and almost simultaneously a wreath of smoke above it burst into view. The attack on the hill with infantry had begun. Our men could be seen climbing up from rock to rock, and the smoke from every musket indicated whether it was fired *up* or fired *down* the hill. Gradually the circles of smoke moved higher and nearer, as our men ascended, and when, near the top, they commingled into one the excitement was intense. Troops on both sides looked on in silence, with hearts throbbing, now with hope, and now stilled with fear, as the line of battle advanced or receded. But soon it was seen that higher up the hill the combatants struggled, until with one wild shout and rush the lines closed, and the top smoked like a volcano. And then through the rifts of smoke we saw our men leaping over the parapets, and the Mexicans retreating down the slope. We clap our hands with joy, and wave our caps! Now, the scene changes. From out the bishop's palace swarms of men issue and rush up the hill to retake the fallen fort. They are met halfway. Our hearts are hushed as we look on. The enemy recede, break and run for the palace, where foe and friends commingled, enter together, and all is still. A heavy gun flashes, and a shell bursts *over* the city from a captured cannon. The flag descends, the stars and stripes go up and wave over the bishop's palace, and the battle is won; and then arose a shout of joy so loud, so long, it seemed to echo from the sky.

There was not much progress made on the 22d, in the eastern part of the city, except to gain a firm footing on the edge of it, by troops under Gen. Quitman. On the morning of the 23d our battery was ordered to the eastern end, and remained inactive while the infantry steadily advanced from house to house. The dwelling houses all had flat roofs, surrounded by walls about three feet high forming so many small fortresses. The house tops were filled with the enemy, and they commanded the streets; besides, the streets leading to the main plaza had been barricaded, and they crossed others at right angles. Gen. Quitman, about noon, ordered Bragg to send a piece of artillery to drive the enemy from a main street running the whole length of the city. To my surprise, instead of sending

Lieut. George H. Thomas, a second in command, he ordered me with the twelve-pound howitzer to report to Gen. Quitman, who instructed me to clear the street.

I could see no troops in this street, except those on the house tops two or three squares in advance: so I moved on down until the musket balls began to clip and rattle along the stone pavement rather lively. To avoid this fire, I turned my gun to the left, into a street leading into the plaza. To my astonishment, one block distant was a stone barricade behind which were troops, and the houses on either side covered with armed men. They were evidently surprised, and did not fire at us. We were permitted to unlimber the gun, and move the horses back into the main street. I politely waved my hand at the men at the barricade, which should read I shook my fist at them, and gave the command to load. Instantly the muskets were leveled over the barricade and pointed down from the house tops, and a volley fired at us that rattled like hail on the stones. My pony received a ricochet musket ball that struck the shoulder blade, ran up over the withers, and was stopped by the girth on the other side. I dismounted, and turned back to the gun. The two men at the muzzle were shot. One poor fellow put his hands to his side and quietly said, "Lieutenant, I am shot," and tried to stop the flow of blood. I had the gun run back into the street by which we entered the city. I now resorted to a device once practiced by a mob in the city of Philadelphia; two long ropes were made fast to the end of the trail, one rope was held by men on the lower side of the barricaded street, and the other by the men above. The gun was now loaded, and leveled in safety, then pushed out, and pulled by the ropes until it pointed at the barricade, and then fired. The recoil sent the gun back, and the rope brought it around the corner to be reloaded. In this manner the gun was worked for two hours, and with all this protection, four out of the five gunners were killed or wounded.

We had not been at this cross street very long before Texans, Mississippians, and regulars began to arrive and cross under cover of the smoke of the gun to the other side, and gain possession of the house tops. Next Gen. Taylor and staff came down the street on foot, and very imprudently he passed the cross street, escaping the many shots fired at him. There he was, almost alone. He tried to enter the store on the corner. The door being locked, he and the Mexican within had a confab, but, not understanding what was said, he called to Col. Kinney, the interpreter: "Come over here." The Colonel said – , and went over at double-quick, and made the owner open the door. The store was empty. Here Gen. Quitman joined him with some troops and a gun in charge of Lieut. G. H. Thomas. Quitman directed me to take my howitzer down to the next cross street, but to save my men and horses. I suggested that Thomas should put his gun in position first, and let us pass over through the smoke. Comprehending the matter at once, he said: "No, you remain here, and let Thomas pass over when you fire." Thomas moved to the next street, and turned his gun into it. His street was barricaded also, and defended by a piece of artillery. The infantry and riflemen now made good progress in gaining possession of the houses, and driving the enemy toward the plaza.

The command of Gen. Worth was all day working toward the plaza from another direction, by breaking through the walls from house to house, so that when night came, the Mexican troops were pent up in the main plaza. Before dusk, the Mexicans being driven back, our two pieces of artillery were withdrawn and ordered to camp at Walnut Springs.

I have gone into these details to show the simplicity of character and coolness of Gen. Taylor which endeared him to his soldiers. No one discussed depots of supplies, base of communications, lines of retreat, or strategic positions; but every one knew that the brave old soldier would fight the enemy, wherever he found them, to the end. During the night some pieces of artillery, and a large mortar were put in position and opened fire on the heart of the city, now so very crowded with people.

Early on the 24th Gen. Ampudia sent a communication to Gen. Taylor, asking permission to leave the city, with his troops and arms unmolested. Of course this was refused, and finally resulted in the appointment of Gen. Worth, Gen. Henderson, and Col. Jefferson Davis commissioners to meet Gens. Requena and Ortega, and M. M. Llano, commissioners on the part of the Mexican army, who arranged the terms of the capitulation. I went to see the poor fellows depart. As they marched by,

the soldiers each carried his musket in one hand, and a long stalk of sugar cane in the other, off of which they were regaling themselves.

They were permitted to retain their arms. In connection with the capitulation, an armistice for two months was agreed to, subject to ratification by the respective governments; and now came rest. Our loss was nearly five hundred, and among the killed was another classmate, Lieut. Robert Hazlitt. I should have mentioned that when the expedition for the capture of Monterey started Gen. Robert Patterson was left in command of the district of the Rio Grande.

After the departure of the Mexican troops, a friendly intercourse was established between our officers and the most respectable families in the city, noted on their part for gracefulness of movement, gravity of manners, extreme politeness, and genuine hospitality.

On one occasion, after dinner, a handsome Mexican saddle elicited the attention of the guests, and to my surprise the next day a servant came to my tent with a note, and the saddle, "begging me to accept it with consideration," etc. A few days afterwards I returned the saddle, with a small present, upon the grounds that it was too handsome for daily exposure in service, etc.

Lieut. Randolph Ridgely brought with him a fine old setter dog, and, as partridges were abundant, I found exercise and amusement in hunting. Lieut. J. F. Reynolds was generally with me, and we would return with all the game we could carry, as the birds were tame and numerous. We also enjoyed the waters of the hot springs near by, now quite a resort for invalids.

On the 27th of October, Capt. R. Ridgely was killed by his horse slipping and falling in the main street of the city, where the smooth natural rock was the pavement. He was, in my estimation, "the fearless and irreproachable knight," the Bayard of the army. What a ball is to a young lady, a fight was to him; it made his step light and his eye radiant with delight, while joyous smiles beamed from his face. It seemed the very irony of fate that he, who had raced his steed on the sea wall of Charleston, and leaped over into the ocean unharmed, should meet an untimely end from a horse falling in an open street. His father lived on Elk Ridge, near Baltimore, a gentleman of the olden school, of an age of the courtly past, and as John Randolph, of Roanoke, was a frequent visitor there, Randolph Ridgely was named for him.

The death of Capt. Ridgely promoted Bragg to his company, and Capt. T. W. Sherman to Bragg's company. Thus Bragg now became the commander of the late Maj. Ringgold's battery of artillery.

It would appear as if some State governor, or some idle general would issue a "Pronunciamento" every new moon in Mexico, in hopes of becoming President of that republic; and thus it was that half the people of Mexico could not tell who was President. And now Paredes was deposed, and Santa Anna, who was permitted to enter Mexico by the United States authorities as a man of peace,<sup>11</sup> reigned in his place. About the middle of September he arrived in the city of Mexico, and hastened soon after to San Luis Potosi to assume the command of the army thrice defeated by Gen. Taylor.

To carry out the wishes of the War Department, to have Tampico captured, Gen. Taylor started for Victoria, a small town, the capital of the State of Tamaulipas, on or about the middle of December, with the troops commanded by Gens. Twiggs and Quitman, leaving Gen. Worth in Saltillo with his division.

On reaching Montemorelos he received information from Gen. Worth that Santa Anna was marching on Saltillo, and turned back with all the troops except those under Gen. Quitman and our battery. Gen. Quitman was to continue on to Victoria. The march was uninterrupted down this beautiful and fertile valley. On our right towered the lofty range of the Sierra Madre Mountains in one unbroken chain and sharp serrated edge, that looked thin enough for a man to sit astride of. In fact, at Santa Catarina, there is a vast hole through this ridge near a thousand feet below the crest, through which clouds, as if in another world, could be seen moving by day, and stars by night.

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<sup>11</sup> It was understood that Santa Anna was to end the war by making a treaty of peace, but he deceived President Polk.

The town of Linares is in a rich, wide, and beautiful valley or plain divided into large sugar estates cultivated by peon labor. The orange trees were very large, and all the citrus fruits abundant. As we journeyed on, one day Christmas came, and as usual it came on time, and, although we were in the land of the saints, we had not faith enough to believe that Santa Claus would make us a visit. So I went into the mountains in quest of a wild turkey for dinner, and failed to kill one. What were we to do? Reynolds or our servants had succeeded in procuring some eggs. With them visions of pudding and "eggnog" arose. We could get "pulque," get "aguardiente," from the maguey plant, but it was villainous fire water. In this dilemma I sent my servant in quest of our doctor – Dr. C. C. Keeney, I think it was – to tell him to call immediately. The eggs were all beaten up ready. The doctor arrived. We made him a prisoner, and told him that he could not be released until he wrote a note to his steward to send him a bottle of brandy and a bottle of rum. He did it on the ground that we all were in want of a stimulant, and on this occasion the doctor took his own prescription. When Plymouth Rock smiles, wonder not that we, far away from home, tried to make the service suit the day, and the day to be one of rejoicing that immortality was brought to light.

We encamped one night at a hacienda not far from Victoria. The owner was very civil and kind; invited us to his drawing-room, walked with us in his large orange grove laden with golden fruit, which was protected by a high stone wall. He possessed a vast sugar estate, and said that he had over five hundred peon laborers on it. As far as we could see there was only sugar cane.

On the 29th of December we marched into the great square, or plaza, of Victoria without meeting with any resistance. The troops were drawn up in line, the officers to the front and facing the alcazar.

The alcalde left his office, crossed the plaza, and after a short address presented the keys of the city to Gen. Quitman. The Mexican standard was hauled down, and as the United States flag was thrown to the breeze the band began to play, when all at once, in emulation, three or four jackasses began to bray, and bray, and drowned all proceedings, amidst roars of laughter that could not be restrained, especially among the volunteers.

We had been in camp but a few days when Gen. Taylor arrived with Gen. Twigg's division, and almost at the same hour Gen. Patterson came in from Matamoras with a large force.

Before I tell you any more I must inform you of certain proceedings and events that happened or took place in the past. One was that the President had ordered the commander in chief, Gen. Winfield Scott, to take the field as he desired, and to proceed to Vera Cruz, and advance on the City of Mexico from that place. Of course all the troops in Mexico were subject to his orders. Accordingly, when Gen. Scott came to the mouth of the Rio Grande, he made known to Gen. Taylor the particular troops that he wished him to order to Vera Cruz by duplicate dispatches. The letter sent to Monterey reached there after Gen. Taylor had started for Victoria. It was reported, and I presume it is true, that the letter was opened and read by Gen. Marshall. If so, then he knew its importance. He committed two grave errors: First, he should have known that it was all important that the dispatches should be so sent as not to fall into the hands of the enemy; and secondly, he should not have required an officer to go to almost certain death when it was not necessary. What did he do? He placed these dispatches in the hands of Lieut. John A. Richey, and sent or permitted him to carry the dispatches *alone* through the enemy's country one hundred and fifty miles to Gen. Taylor at Victoria. The consequence was that as Lieut. Richey was leaving the town of Villa Gran he was "lassoed" by a Mexican, pulled from his horse, murdered, and the dispatches forwarded in all haste to Santa Anna, who learned how Gen. Taylor would be stripped of all the United States troops and most of his volunteer force, how Gen. Scott was on his way to Vera Cruz to capture that city, and then to march on his capital.

Santa Anna's decision was prompt and decided. It was what a great commander would have done. He decided to attack Gen. Taylor without delay, defeat him, if possible, recover all the territory lost, even to the Nueces river; then fly to the defense of his capital in time to meet Gen. Scott before he passed the strong defenses of Cerro Gordo.

He did not succeed in defeating Gen. Taylor, but he met Scott as he had planned to do. This was told by Col. Iturbide, a son of the last emperor of Mexico, whom I met after the war.

When Gen. Taylor received the duplicate of the orders from Gen. Scott at Victoria, and learned how he was to be stripped of nearly all the gallant men who had won for him the three battles, he gave the necessary orders for the departure of the troops called for, and this embraced the divisions of Gens. Worth and Twiggs, and most of Gen. Patterson's forces. In short, all the *regular* troops were sent to Vera Cruz, except four field batteries of artillery and two squadrons of dragoons, in all about six hundred men. I will not write here my opinion, as formed from observation or otherwise, of Gen. Taylor's equanimity of mind on that occasion. However, it was reported that by mistake he once put mustard in his coffee instead of sugar. Wonder not at his perplexity. He had enough to irritate him. He had some apprehension, no doubt, that the enemy might make an advance from San Luis Potosi on his now small force; but what wounded his pride was – Apollyon behind him – the party opposed to the annexation of any territory south had expressed a wish that our troops might be welcomed by the Mexicans with "bloody hands and hospitable graves;" and the administration, alarmed at his growing popularity with the Whig party, hoping to divide or parallel his fame with another, sent Gen. Scott with such an inadequate force that *he* was obliged to deprive Gen. Taylor of such troops as I have stated. So Gen. Taylor had Santa Anna in *front*, the jealous administration and the anti-annexation party in Congress to fight *behind* him. The sequel will disclose his intrepid character, and his triumph in the end over all.

In the latter part of January Gen. Taylor took his departure from Victoria for Monterey. His escort consisted of Col. Jefferson Davis's regiment of Mississippi Rifles, two squadrons of dragoons, and our battery. My heart was not so light nor my feelings so buoyant as when we went journeying southward. I have mentioned how Lieut. Richey was murdered at Villa Gran and his dispatches taken. When Gen. Taylor reached that town he directed our battery and the dragoons to be halted in the plaza, and, sending for the alcalde, held a court to investigate the murder of Richey. The murderer was demanded. The alcalde said that he did not know who was the guilty man, and could not produce him. The general did not credit his story; said he would hang him if he did not give information as to who was the criminal. The alcalde was very much frightened, and turned pale and trembled. The examination of such persons as were called was fruitless, and ended in Gen. Taylor notifying the alcalde that he would levy a contribution on the town of (I believe) some \$50,000 as indemnity, which would have to be paid in three weeks unless the murderer was caught and delivered to him. In all this the priests assisted the alcalde, and endeavored to pacify the General.

When the court left the hall the General discovered that his baggage wagons had been halted, and that vexed him, and to further irritate him, a piece of artillery blocked the road by not being able to get up a steep hill. The General pulled the driver's ear, got the piece up, and ordered it to remain outside the road until everything had passed. When he rode away, I ordered the gun into the road, and it was driven on. I never learned whether the murderer of Richey was apprehended or not.

When we arrived at Monterey we went into our old camp at Walnut Springs. We had some idle time to ride out in the country. The scenery around Monterey is very beautiful. There are near the city two isolated mountains – Saddle Mountain and Mitra Mountain – behind which the chain of the Sierra Madre rises in towering grandeur from the plain to the height of near five thousand feet, stretching beyond vision as one vast wall of rock, with a serrated edge seemingly as sharp as a saw, and inaccessible to man. Nearly every morning a canopy of clouds would form around the breast of Saddle Mountain, extending overhead to the distance of five or six miles. Gradually, as the day advanced, the clouds from the outer edge would sail gently away one after the other, disrobing the mountain and exposing the beauty of its form to view.

Once I was on the mountain above the clouds, in the bright sunshine looking down upon this billowy sea. Beyond was the lofty ridge glowing in the sun; around, hiding the plain for miles distant, was an ocean of clouds white as snow, softer than carded wool, lighter than down, rolling and swelling

as silent as the heavens above them. Then they floated slowly away, melting into air, and left me to look down on the gross earth to which I must return.

When Gen. Worth believed that Santa Anna was on the march to Saltillo, Gen. Wool left Parras and hastened to Agua Nueva, and held that place, which is seventeen or more miles in advance of Saltillo.

Sometime in the early part of February our company left Monterey, and we began our march to Saltillo. Moving west, we passed the bishop's palace. Thence the road runs along the base of the Cerro de la Mitra Mountains for miles, with the Sierra Madre on the left; and, although this immense ridge was about eight miles distant, it was so abruptly high and the atmosphere so clear that it appeared not more distant than one could cast a stone.

Marching on, we passed some mills; then through a valley in the mountains, highly cultivated, trees bordering the road, and then down an incline to the hacienda of Rinconada, closed in by mountains. The road then ascends by a high grade to Los Muertos, thence on to Saltillo. The ascent to Los Muertos reminded me of Thiers's description of the road rising up the Incanale to the plateau of Rivoli, in his account of that battle in Napoleon's Italian campaigns. I am sure no troops could advance up that incline, straight and narrow, against well-served artillery. It was not fortified by the Mexicans to any extent, because it could be turned by two distant passes. This march of sixty odd miles was interesting in a high degree. Lofty mountains, deep valleys, wild, narrow passes, beautiful green fields in cultivation, babbling brooks surprising me at every turn. During this march from Monterey to Saltillo we made or gained an elevation of over four thousand four hundred feet, and we were now over six thousand feet above the ocean. The city is built on a slope that rises across the valley from mountains to mountains. You must understand that when we rose from out that steep ascent at Los Muertos there was apparently a plain before us, but really it was a valley, with continuous mountains on either side, all the way to Agua Nueva; thence, on south toward the City of Mexico as far as the eye could see were blue peaks towering in the sky.

As you will soon have a battle on hand "and a famous victory," I will here give you some idea of the ground. Leaving the city of Saltillo and going south, the first place of note is the hacienda of Buena Vista,<sup>12</sup> five miles distant, with its thick adobe (sun-dried brick) walls and flat roofs; next, a point eight miles from the city called La Angustura (the Narrows), which became the center of the battlefield. Farther on is Encantada, the enchanted place, and then Agua Nueva, nearly twenty miles from Saltillo. The ravines on the left of the road at Angustura ran back to the base of the mountain, and to the right of the road were deep gullies (barrancas), some extending to the mountains on the west. At one place the ravines on the left and the gullies on the right approach so near that there is room only for the road, forming the Narrows.

It was about the 8th of February when we reached Saltillo, and soon after we were sent to the front at Agua Nueva. From many sources came corroborative testimony that the enemy was advancing on Saltillo by detachments. Seventy volunteers, under Majs. Borland and Gaines, were captured at Encarnacion, within twenty miles of where we were encamped. On the 20th Col. May was sent to Hediondo on a reconnoissance, and some of his troops were captured, but he returned with the information given him by a deserter from the Mexican army that Santa Anna, with an army of twenty thousand men, was at La Encarnacion, only twenty miles distant from Agua Nueva. May got back early on the morning of the 21st, and a few hours after Maj. McCulloch arrived with like information, with this difference: He went to Encarnacion, climbed a lofty peak that overlooked the encampment of the Mexicans, and computed their number *for himself*. This was confirmation strong.

On the 20th I went hunting with Lieut. R. L. Moore, of the Mississippi regiment. The day was warm; the winds were in their caves; an ominous silence pervaded all nature; the sun did not dazzle the eye, and was distinct in outline, like the full moon; the game was tame and stupid; Moore was heavy

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<sup>12</sup> "Beautiful View."

of heart and dreamy. There was something peculiar in this silence – like the desert – like the stillness that oft precedes the tempest and the earthquake. Did Moore have a premonition of his death? He fell in the coming battle. The day left a lasting impression on my mind, it was so weirdlike and mystical.

"By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust  
Ensuing danger; as by proof, we see  
The water swell before a boisterous storm."

On the 21st, as I have mentioned, both May and McCulloch returned to camp. Bragg, in his usual sarcastic manner commenting on May's expedition, remarked: "I perceive that it is harder to *lose* one's reputation than to make it."

It being an open country for some distance around Agua Nueva, Gen. Taylor, considering the great superiority of the enemy in numbers, resolved to fall back to Angustura, the narrow pass, near Buena Vista. Our company went into camp on the plain above and near the city. On the morning of the 22d, we moved down to the site selected for the field of battle. If the Hudson river, where it passes through the Catskill Mountains, were dry and wider, and its surface furrowed by deep ravines and water gullies crossing it, it would resemble the field of Buena Vista.

Capt. Washington's battery of eight guns was placed in the road at the Narrows. Thence a ravine ran in a southeasterly direction. At the mouth of this ravine, on the plain, the line of infantry commenced and extended on the left toward the mountains. The howitzer which I commanded was put in position on the left of Col. Bissell's Second Regiment of Illinois. Lieut. G. H. Thomas had his gun on the right of this regiment. It was not long before away in the distance clouds of dust were seen growing larger and nearer as the cavalry came in sight; then came artillery and infantry moving to their right and confronting our line, with bands playing and banners waving. Hours were consumed in this movement. In the meantime Gen. Santa Anna under a flag of truce sent to Gen. Taylor a long communication, particularly informing him that he was surrounded by twenty thousand men, and to avoid being cut to pieces, called on him to surrender at discretion, that he would be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican character, etc., and inscribed it: "God and liberty! Camp at Encantada, February 22, 1847. Anto. Lopez de Santa Anna."

It was in the Spanish language, and had to be translated to the General. Turning to Maj. Bliss, his adjutant general, he announced a very forcible reply that was toned down by Maj. Bliss to the following:

*Headquarters Army of Occupation, }  
Near Buena Vista, February 22, 1847.}*

*Sir:* In reply to your note of this date summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

*Z. Taylor,  
Major General U. S. A., Commanding.*

Senor Gen. D. Anto. Lopez de Santa Anna, Commanding in Chief,  
Encantada.

As no signs of an advance had been made, and as none could be attempted until after the return of the flag of truce, I rode down to where Gen. Taylor was to learn the purport of the dispatch. I regret now that I did not write down the exact words made by the General in his verbal reply.

I am sorry that I have no time to write you a description of this battle, but you will find it in some of the histories of this war. I can only tell you what relates to me and what I saw and heard.



At 3 P.M. the firing of a solitary gun by the enemy was the signal for battle; and immediately the enemy began ascending a ridge of the mountain on our left. At the same time our troops began climbing up another. These two ridges, like the sides of a triangle, met at a point halfway up the mountain side; so the higher they went the nearer they approached each other. This skirmishing on the mountain continued long after dark, and the bright flashes of the muskets imparted an interest to the surroundings.

When this prelude terminated, under the watchful sentinels, the two armies rested as best they could during the night. If you will bear in mind that the height of Mount Washington is 6,234 feet, and that the plain or valley of La Encantada is 6,140 feet above tide water, you will not be impressed with the idea that we were slumbering in an atmosphere as balmy as Egypt. On the contrary, the wind swept along the valley like a young Dakota blizzard.

Maj. John Munroe, one of the kindest men to be found in the army, may have derived his knowledge of Connecticut "bundling" from the veritable historian Diedrick Knickerbocker or otherwise; but be that as it may, he suggested to Lieut. J. F. Reynolds and me that we should "bundle" to keep warm during the night. So a blanket was spread on the ground and the others used for covering. The Major slept to windward, and Reynolds to leeward. In all my varied experience in life I cannot recall a night when I came so near perishing from cold. Yet there was nothing severely frozen, only the wind carried off all the heat from our bodies. When we got up I could not keep my teeth quiet. Some of the men of the company had a little fire, and we warmed our hands. Everybody was shivering. My servant was in camp at Saltillo, and I do not remember getting any breakfast; I know I had no dinner or supper.

Santa Anna was very considerate in not having reveille till a late hour, and then it was sounded in one command after another, perhaps to impress us with the number he had. Everything was done with Spanish gravity suitable to the occasion. There was no running to and fro, but decorum marked their proceedings, for I had an opportunity to judge. There had been some skirmishing since daylight up in the mountain, which was merely a side show. I was ordered by Col. Churchill to go to the base of the mountain and ride down the side of the ravine in front of the enemy to ascertain if it could be crossed by artillery. I did as directed, and was not fired at. This was before the heavy masses of infantry were put in motion. I reported the ravine impassable for artillery.

The enemy's infantry was formed into three columns of attack. One moved down the road toward Washington's battery. The central one was composed of two divisions commanded by Gens. Lombardini and Pacheco. Their third column had been deployed already, and a part of it had been skirmishing all the morning on the mountain side. I took the greatest interest in the central column. Pacheco managed to get his division in a ravine by entering it at the gorge, and moved up concealed, directly in front of us. I tried to burst shells over them by shortening the fuses, as they were only about one hundred and fifty yards distant. Their firing increased rapidly. As Lombardini was advancing across the plateau to Pacheco's right, Pacheco's division rose from the ravine (to form line with him) directly opposite the Second Illinois troops. Instantly Bissell's and Lane's infantry opened fire on them, and Thomas and I used canister as rapidly as men (so well trained as ours were) could serve the guns.

Unfortunately some of Lane's troops gave way and fled, and this enabled the enemy to gain our left flank and rear. At this time I was struck with an ounce musket ball in the upper part of the right thigh while my left foot was in the stirrup in the act of mounting my horse. The shot was not painful at all, and the sensation was that of being struck with a club. I was put on my horse, as I could not walk. Soon after, to prevent being entirely surrounded, we were ordered to fall back toward the road, and came into line facing toward the mountain, and opened fire, now taking the enemy in flank and rear as they were crossing the plain. I refused to be taken from my horse and put in a wagon, knowing I would be "lanced" by the Mexicans in case of disaster, so I sat on my horse all the rest of the day walking him sometimes to the battery when it remained in one place any length of time.

In the attack made in our rear Reynolds came by with his guns, and we drove back a large body of cavalry alone. Reynolds at the caissons prepared the shells, cut the fuses himself, and I directed the firing until the Mexican troops were driven beyond the range of the shells. He then moved in pursuit at full gallop and left me alone. The enemy was now in our front, left flank, and rear. When Reynolds left me I concluded to go to the hacienda of Buena Vista, now close by; but before I reached there I noticed the Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry forming in line a little way to the east of the hacienda, and at the same time I saw a brigade of the enemy's lancers coming from the base of the mountain to attack them. As I had never seen a cavalry fight, I watched it with a great deal of interest, being close by. The enemy were over two to one of ours. They came on in solid column, received the fire of our men without being checked at all, rode directly through our men, using their lances freely on every side. After passing over our troops they went near the hacienda, and were fired on by our men on the top of the building as they passed by. This brigade of lancers crossed the road to the west, then went south and joined the army where Santa Anna was, thereby having made the complete *circuit of our army* during the battle.

When this affair was ended I saw another body of the enemy's cavalry coming down from near the mountains heading for the hacienda, and our infantry moving to intercept them. Observing large crowds around and in the buildings, I went to them. I asked them, I begged them, implored them to fall into line, not to fight, but to show themselves to the enemy. I got about twenty into a company, and while waiting for others to join one by one those that I had asked went into the building for their companions until finally I was left alone, none of them returning. By this time the cavalry referred to came on down in splendid style, and, instead of making a headlong charge, halted in front of the Mississippians and Indianians under Col. Jefferson Davis, and were repulsed with heavy loss. One of the guns of our battery was also engaged in this isolated fight. Why this cavalry rode down into the very jaws of death and came to a halt I never heard explained.

Wearied, tired, and weakened by loss of blood, with my leg stiff and useless, I rode into the court of the hacienda, and was taken from my horse and carried into a very large room and laid on the floor. The whole floor was covered with wounded. I was placed between two soldiers. One had both legs broken below the knee. The scene almost beggars description. The screams of agony from pain, the moans of the dying, the messages sent home by the despairing, the parting farewells of friends, the incoherent speech, the peculiar movements of the hands and fingers, silence, the spirit's flight – to where? And amidst all this some of the mean passions of humanity were displayed. Near me was a poor soldier hopelessly wounded. He was cold, and yet a wretch came and, against remonstrances, took the blanket off him, claiming that it was his.

On the field I was twice taken from my horse by the surgeons and had the wound probed, but no probe could reach the ball. No surgeon was at the hacienda, so there I remained until after dark. I think there must have been seven or eight hundred able-bodied men at the buildings who had left ranks. When the firing ended Gen. Taylor came. A tailboard of a wagon was brought in, I was placed on it and carried out and put in a common wagon (by the General, Dr. Hitchcock, Col. May, and some others) between two wounded men. One of them was Col. Jefferson Davis, the other a lieutenant of volunteers. I said to the General I hoped he would gain a complete victory on the morrow, and his reply was: "Yes, yes, if too many of my men do not give me the slip to-night." I think he made this reply because he was mortified and pained to find so many men at the hacienda who had deserted the field, many of them by carrying off the wounded and not returning to their companies.

I was taken to our camp at Saltillo, put on the ground in my tent with but little covering, and left alone. Where my servant was I know not. The camp was silent, every one being away on or near the field of battle. It was to me a night of bodily suffering. About daylight I heard footsteps and called aloud, and was answered by a passing soldier coming to my relief. That morning I was moved to a hospital and received medical attention, and soon after I was sent to a private house occupied by the wife of one of our soldiers, where I received every care and was made comfortable.

When I left my gun I went in search of an army surgeon, as I was urged to do by Lieut. Thomas, because I became dizzy and had to be taken from my horse for a while. I found Dr. Hitchcock somewhere in the field and exposed to some fire from the enemy in front. He advised me to take a wagon and go to the hospital. He was extracting a ball from Capt. Enoch Steen, of the dragoons, who was wounded, and who, perhaps to divert his mind from what the doctor was doing, or for relief from pain, was cursing two men who had stopped on their way back to their company to see the operation performed. He ordered them away, called them cowards, and other vile names; but still they moved not until a musket ball came passing by more closely than others, knocked the hat off the head of one of them, and left his head white where it cut the hair from his scalp. He dropped his musket and jumped and danced around like mad, crying out, "I am killed, I am killed," to Steen's amusement and relief from the knife, by diverting his attention.

After the right wing of the Mexican army, which had gotten away behind us, had been checked, it began to fall back along the base of the mountains, and succeeded finally in reaching the position it started from by a *trick* of Santa Anna's. Under a flag of truce, which our troops respected, he sent a message to Gen. Taylor "*to know what he wanted*," and when our troops stopped firing he withdrew his right wing.<sup>13</sup>

After this came the last great effort of the enemy. He massed his troops and made the second grand attack very much as he did in the morning, and over the same ground. How near he came being successful by this sudden attack on the force centered about Angostura while so many of our men were away near the base of the mountains in our rear, you will find in the published accounts of the battle; and it was caused by the enemy making the attack before our troops could get on the plateau by reason of the circuitous route around the ravines that could not be crossed. I did not see this last struggle. Lieut. O'Brien lost his guns. Bragg would have lost his in a few minutes had not our battery and Davis's and Lane's regiments arrived the moment they did to meet the advancing mass of the enemy. It was a death struggle. Our concentrated fire swept away the advancing line, the second faltered, halted, fell back, and the field was won.

Santa Anna, when referring to this battle, frequently declared that he "won the victory, only Gen. Taylor did not know when he was whipped," and just stayed there, while *he* was obliged to go back for water, provisions, and forage, and left the field to Taylor. I take this occasion to express my gratification to Santa Anna, even at this late date, for not staying on the field he had won, and I acknowledge his distinguished consideration in permitting me to remain at Saltillo. How vexatious it must have been to Santa Anna in his old age to recall to mind that the ignorance of Gen. Taylor in not knowing he was whipped so changed his destiny, and no doubt he thought how truthful is the line:

"Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise."

We had present 4,691 officers and men, and our loss was: killed, 272; wounded, 388; missing, 6; total, 666. The relative number of wounded to the killed is very remarkable. Usually there are five or more wounded to one killed. The enemy numbered over 20,000 men. Although their reports place their loss at over 4,000, it falls short of the real number.

At dawn on the following morning it was discovered that Santa Anna had retreated to Agua Nueva. Gen. Taylor, with a proper escort, rode to Encantada and sent Col. Bliss to Santa Anna for an exchange of prisoners captured before the battle. This was effected. The wounded Mexicans even from Encarnacion were removed to Saltillo for medical care.

Here we have the achievements of one plain, unpretending practical, common sense man, who was ever observant of duty, and whose declaration was, "I will fight the enemy wherever I find him,"

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<sup>13</sup> The Mexican story is: That a Mexican lieutenant in the first line got mixed up with our troops and feigned a *parley* and was carried to Gen. Taylor. This was followed by his returning to the Mexican line accompanied by two American officers to have an interview with Santa Anna. Then our line stopped firing and theirs did not. If this Mexican officer bore a flag of truce, it would explain why we stopped firing, and I am quite sure he did.

summed up in four victories – Palo Alto, Resaca, Monterey, and Buena Vista. Success, ordinarily, is the measure of the greatness of a soldier.

## CHAPTER VII

Drs. T. C. Madison, U. S. A., and G. M. Provost – Surgical Operation – Courtesy of a Mexican Woman – Leave Saltillo – Paltry Escort – Safe at Monterey – The Rio Grande – Maj. W. W. H. Davis – New Orleans – Gen. Pillow – Col. McIntosh – Bailey Peyton and Sargeant S. Prentiss – Drunk by Absorption – Steamer for Louisville – Racing on the River – Trip to Pittsburg, Pa. – By Canal Boat to Harrisburg – Home – Report to the Adjutant General – Go to Trenton, N. J. – Presentation of a Sword – Go to Washington – John W. Forney's Bargain with Secretary Buchanan – Capt. A. W. Reynolds – Sent to Troy, N. Y. – Gen. Wool – Leave Buffalo – Toledo – To Cincinnati by Canal – Society in Cincinnati – Appointed Captain and Assistant Quartermaster – Start for Washington – Cross the Alleghany Mountains by Stage – Six Commissions in United States Army – Reception by Gen. Jesup – Capt. Rufus Ingalls.

I now come back to personal matters. The weather was springlike. The door of my room in Saltillo opened on the street on a level with the pavements, and through it and the windows I could see all the passersby, and it imparted a cheerfulness to the surroundings.

My physician was Thomas C. Madison, United States army, a most estimable gentleman and skillful surgeon. Several consultations were held in my case. They would not cut for the ball because they could not discover where it was. I was becoming emaciated, and felt conscious that I could not live unless the ball was removed. I had now been on the cot over forty days, and I demanded that they should extract the ball, for I could tell them *where* it was. So next day Dr. Madison came, and with him Dr. Grayson M. Prevost. They declined to use the knife, but promised to come on the morrow, and Dr. Madison came alone next morning. No one was present but my servant. I placed my finger over where I was sure the ball was then located, and told him to perform his duty, that I was responsible for the result. In those days there was no anæsthetic known, and surgical instruments were not often made for special purposes. As I predicted, the doctor found the ball. I was watching his face intently, and the moment he touched the ball I saw an expression of delight come over his countenance. Suffice to say, for the want of modern instruments, he cut a gash, or hole, large enough to insert his finger and a large steel hook to get the ball out. I think the doctor was in a better humor than I was, for I had said bad words to my servant for not holding my foot. I found afterwards it was the tetanus that cramped or contracted the muscles of the leg. In three days I managed to sit on the side of my cot; and some days after, with crutches, I went to the door and looked into the street.

And now I must tell you a little incident. From my cot I could see a Mexican woman who almost every afternoon would sit on her doorstep. She must have been very old, for her hair was as white as snow, her cheeks were bony, and her hands without flesh. She must have sympathized with me, though her enemy in war, for on seeing me at my door she rose from her seat, made a slight courtesy, and soon after sent me a bunch of fresh flowers by a little girl.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world akin."

Sometime early in April I was informed that I could have an ambulance, with leave to return to the United States and report to the Adjutant General in Washington.

I was furnished with an escort of *two men* on horses and my servant, five in all, to pass through the enemy's country to Monterey, a protection really inadequate. We reached Rinconada late in the day, and my bed was the counter of an abandoned store. The next day we arrived at Monterey safely, and I was made very comfortable by the quartermaster. I remained in the city until a train of wagons left for Camargo for army supplies, and when we started I took one "last, long, lingering" look at the

surroundings of the city which had but a few months before been to me so pregnant with exciting events.

The journey to Camargo was devoid of particular interest. I found a government steamer there, and took passage for Point Isabel, or Brazos Santiago. On the trip down the river we saw a great many cattle that, in attempting to get water, had sunk in the mud to perish. Some had only their heads visible; others, a part of their bodies. It was a piteous sight to see the poor beasts, while yet alive, being devoured by buzzards.

When I arrived at Matamoras Capt. W. W. H. Davis came down to the steamer to see me. He was a student with us at Burlington, N. J., and was a general in the United States army during the late war, and is now a resident of Doylestown, Pa. When in Matamoras he was a member of the staff of Gen. Caleb Cashing. He had retained my mail, and brought it to me on the steamer. Among the letters was one from Hon. Garret D. Wall informing me that the citizens of New Jersey had caused a sword to be made for me, and had placed it in his hands for presentation, at such place and time as would suit my convenience. This was a surprise to me, for no one had informed me of these matters.

On arrival at Point Isabel there were a brig and a steamer ready to sail for New Orleans. I was put on board the brig, but it was so dirty that I could not remain, preferring to risk my life on the old sidewheel steamer James L. Day. As I was taken ashore I met Col. McClung, of Mississippi, also wounded, going on the brig, where he remained. On the steamer were some officers on their way to New Orleans from Gen. Scott's army, and among them was Gen. Gideon J. Pillow, who was wounded slightly at Cerro Gordo. The steamer was unfit for a voyage on the ocean, although the weather was calm and the sea smooth. I amused myself watching from my cot the partition boards slide up and down, caused by the gentle rolling of the vessel. On reaching New Orleans we landed aside of some ship, on which I was placed, put in a chair, hoisted up and run out the yardarm, and lowered on to the wharf.

I think we arrived in New Orleans about the 18th of May. At the St. Charles I met a number of old friends, army officers and civilians, and among the latter were Col. Bailey Peyton and S. S. Prentiss. In a few days I learned to locomote very well on one leg and my crutches.

Some few days after we arrived in the city a grand illumination and street procession was gotten up to celebrate some victory of our army in Mexico, and late in the afternoon a committee called on me to participate. About 8 P.M. Col. MacIntosh and myself were escorted to a barouche drawn by four white horses, to take our place in the line of procession. The streets were crowded with people. The horses did not like the crowd, the shouts, the music, nor the transparencies, and manifested it by frequently standing upon their hind legs; and had it become necessary to get out of the carriage, I was not able to do so. The Colonel and I were put on exhibition as two "heroes" from the war. The Colonel, as you remember, deserved it, for he was once pinned to the earth with bayonets and lances. One bayonet went in his mouth and passed through his neck into the earth. I rejoice to say we were returned to our landlord, from whom we had been borrowed, safely. I write this to show you how evanescent these things are. To-day we are the idols of the crowd; to-morrow we pass along the same street unobserved, unheeded, unknown save to friends. So passes away much of the glory of this world.

One evening after tea Col. Peyton and Mr. Prentiss asked me if I was able to join them in a short walk down the street. We had gone but a little way when, passing a door, we heard some one speaking, and loud applause in a hall, the floor of which was on a level with the pavement. Mr. Peyton said: "Let us go in." It proved to be a political meeting called for the purpose of expressing a preference for some one of the prominent men in the Whig party for the presidency. Mr. Hunt, who was speaking, closed his address in a few minutes after we entered. We were close to the door by which we had entered. Some one saw Mr. Prentiss, and called out: "Prentiss!" He turned to gain the street, but the crowd would not let him pass, while "Prentiss! Prentiss!" came from a hundred mouths. He exclaimed to his friend: "Why did we come here?" There was no alternative but to face

the standing crowd. He uncovered his head and in a few words excused himself. It was in vain! The cry was everywhere: "Go to the platform!" Getting into a chair that chanced to be near the door, he spoke somewhat as follows, as I recall it after a lapse of near fifty years:

*Mr. Chairman and Friends:* As I was passing along this street with some friends I saw lights in this room and heard loud applause, and we entered to ascertain what was the object of the meeting, and from the closing remarks made by the distinguished gentleman who has just taken his seat I can infer the object of this assemblage.

When a young lady has been robed for a grand ball her maid opens and places on the toilet table before her her jewelry case, that she may select such as will be the most appropriate for the occasion. She takes out the sapphires and arrays them on her person to embellish her charms, but she places them on the table before her. The attendant encircles her swanlike neck with pearls, emblems of her purity, but she has them placed beside the sapphires. They put diamonds in her ears, and the sparkling cross rests on her bosom, flashing incessant lights as it rises and falls with every breath. She surveys them carefully; then has them removed and put aside also. And now rubies, the most costly of stones, are contrasted with her fair complexion; and at last they too are removed and laid with the others. She surveys them all, contrasts their qualities, and as each would be alike appropriate for the occasion, she stands undecided which is preferable. Now, Mr. Chairman, when I open the casket of *Whig jewels*, and gaze on their varied brilliancy, I am as undecided as the young lady was. They differ in some respects, but each is qualified for the opportunity, and I hesitate which I would commend as most worthy to occupy the presidential chair.

How nicely he evades an expression of preference for any one for the office, and this without offense to any of the aspirants!

While speaking of Mr. Prentiss I will relate to you as best I can a story of his reply to Mr. P., who accused him of intoxication while they were each making the joint canvass for Congress from Mississippi. And I will premise it by stating that P. had the reputation of being a lover of whisky. It was before a large and appreciative audience of Prentiss's friends, and in joint debate that the charge was made. In replying to that Mr. Prentiss said in his rejoinder, as I heard it related:

*Ladies and Gentlemen:* Many of you know me well, you have been present with me at numerous social entertainments, and I acknowledge it is true that I have a taste for the light wines of Italy and the pleasant wines of France. Wines have been the common beverage of mankind on festive occasions from the remotest ages. They impart a genial warmth to my feelings, a glow of tenderness to my heart, awaken my imagination, enlarge my sympathy, and give to music enrapturing charms, until in the fullness of joy I forget the ills of life and love my fellow-men.

I assure you, my friends, I have never been drunk from *drinking* whisky; but my opponent here is never so happy as when he retires to his room and draws from the closet his demijohn of whisky, throws it over his back, tips it over his shoulder: and no music is so sweet to his ear as the sound of the whisky singing "gurgle, gurgle, gurgle," as it leaps into the cup, save only that other sound of "gargle, gargle, gargle," as he pours it down his capacious throat.

I have told you that I have never been drunk from drinking whisky. But by whisky, ah! I remember me now; I was once made drunk, and it happened in this way. Sometime ago I had occasion to attend court in a remote county, sparsely settled, and where there was but little accommodation for the court. I arrived after night and repaired to the house pointed out to me where I could get lodging. The

proprietor said his rooms were all full, but there was one room occupied by a lawyer that had a double bed in it, and perhaps he would share it with me. When I was ready to retire the landlord took a tallow candle and conducted me to the room. By the dim light I saw my present opponent in bed asleep, oblivious to sounds. I retired and slept by his side. When morning came I found myself possessed of a strange feeling; I was dizzy, sick, drunk. Yes, *drunk by absorption!*

When Mr. Prentiss began the great speech he made in New York City a clergyman took his watch from his pocket to note the time; and two hours after, when Mr. Prentiss fell exhausted, this clergyman felt his pocket for his watch. It was gone, and he thought he was robbed, until he discovered his watch open in his left hand. He was so captivated and *en rapport* with the wonderful orator that he was oblivious to time, and stood there in the vast crowd listening to the words as they fell from his lips. Turning to a friend, he exclaimed: "Never tell me that man is not inspired."

I could tell you many things about this remarkable man, but time and other matters forbid. I will say, however, that I believe that *Alexander Hamilton* and *S. S. Prentiss* head the list of all men in the United States who have achieved greatness in early life. Prentiss's oratory burst on the people like a meteor athwart the sky, and ended as suddenly with his early death.

When I left New Orleans the surgeons advised me that I should go by water as far as I could on my journey north, and avoid the shaking of the railroad cars. I took passage on the steamer Chancellor for Louisville, and when we backed out from the levee and headed up the river we saw a steamer – the Belle of the West, I think it was – close behind us, and then the race began. For fifteen hundred miles it was a bitter struggle; first one ahead and then the other, according to the landings made. Now the Belle would be ahead and then our pilot would quit the main channel and by taking the "chutes" come out ahead. Then we would be overtaken and run side by side. Often the two boats ran with their guards touching, allowing the passengers of the two steamers to converse with each other and have a jolly time. On the Belle was a lady with her three daughters, of whom you will hear more hereafter. At Paducah, finding a number of barrels of resin, our captain bought them to use with the wood to increase the steam. So on and on we went, with boilers hissing and volumes of black smoke rolling from the smokestacks or chimneys, forming great clouds that were wafted away by the winds. After five or six days and nights of clanking of the fire doors, ringing of the bells above and below, and the blowing of whistles, we arrived at Louisville just fifteen minutes behind the Belle.

When I look back on the danger incurred from the explosion of a boiler, I cannot recall to mind one word of protest from any passenger against carrying such a high pressure of steam, or of asking the officers to desist. On the contrary, every one would shout for joy and wave their handkerchiefs on the passing boat.

However reprehensible, those races were common in the palmy days of steamboats on the "Father of Waters."

From Louisville I went to Cincinnati, thence on a small steamer to Pittsburg. Here I took passage on a canal boat for the east. As time was no object to me, I was not impatient of delay, and enjoyed the wild mountain scenery of the Alleghanies, and the pretty views along the blue Juniata; and as chance would have it, among the passengers were the lady (Mrs. J. L. Roberts) and her daughters that were on the Belle of the West, to whom I was presented by the gentleman who came to Pittsburg to meet them. They went by canal because one of them had been injured by having been thrown from their carriage. From this time on they were kind friends of mine, and I recall with delight the many happy days that I subsequently passed at their home on their plantation back of Natchez, Miss.

I reached home in June, and my father and mother welcomed me – whom the newspapers had reported killed in battle – with a joy not unlike that given to him for whom the fattened calf was killed.

I soon reported at the Adjutant General's office, and was given indefinite leave. Returning home, I received a note from a friend in the office of the Quartermaster General soon after, telling me that there were some vacancies in the quartermaster's department, and that if I would return to



Washington and report to the department for duty I might be made captain and assistant quartermaster in the regular staff; but I did not go until sometime in July.

I received a letter from Senator G. D. Wall stating that it was the wish of the committee that I should be in Trenton on the fourth of July to receive the sword that was to be presented to me. So I repaired to Burlington, and in company with him and the Rt. Rev. G. W. Doane, bishop of New Jersey, went to Trenton. When the people were leaving the hotel for the public hall where the presentation was to take place, the Senator sent me the manuscript of his intended remarks. It was too late to write anything in reply, as the carriages were waiting; so we got in and went to the hall. I was very much frightened. There were many on the stage or platform, and among them an officer of the navy in uniform. I had on a citizen's dress.

Mr. Wall made a very appropriate address, and delivered the sword to me. I am sure that I made a very poor reply, and the only good thing was its brevity. But think of it! Wall did not say anything that he had written, but made an extempore speech, much to my surprise. When it was ended Senator W. L. Dayton said to the General: "You made an excellent address." "Well, I have a much better one in my pocket," was his reply. As I was comparatively a stranger to most of the large audience, I think the officer in uniform was taken for me, for when I rose to receive the sword there was a hum of surprise all over the house. I was glad when the presentation was ended. The next thing in order was to dine with the "Society of the Cincinnati," of New Jersey. I was invited to dine with the "Society of the Cincinnati" of Pennsylvania also, but declined. One dinner was ample, and I was not strong.

In a day or two I returned to Washington. I was ordered by Dr. A. S. Wotherspoon to quit all labor, and after he had bandaged my leg he kept me on my back three weeks. It did no good; no adhesion of the parts was made. I was vexed; so I took from my trunk a bottle of I know not what, obtained in New Orleans, only it smelled of turpentine, and injected it into the wound. I got up in the morning to go home, but lo and behold, the bandages were all saturated with blood and the wound inflamed. So, instead of going home, I was put on my back again. However that injection inflamed the sinus in my leg, and when bandaged again all the interior grew together, and in three weeks I was on my crutches, and my toes, or foot, touched the ground for the first time for about six months. So I was permanently cured by accident.

I had made application to the President for the appointment of assistant quartermaster some time in June. Now one day in July, when I was kept in bed by the doctor, a friend of mine, Mr. Nugent, came to my room to impart to me the information that I would not get the appointment because I could not "take the field," and that it would be given to Lieut. A. W. Reynolds, who was in Philadelphia on recruiting service. Nugent was connected with a newspaper, and was at times an assistant in the office of James Buchanan, Secretary of State, if I remember aright. On that day J. W. Forney, editor of *The Pennsylvanian*, a Democratic paper in Philadelphia, was in the office of Mr. Buchanan, and agreed to throw George M. Dallas, Vice President, overboard and support Mr. Buchanan for the presidency provided certain things were done by him for Mr. Forney. One of these items was that A. W. Reynolds should be appointed assistant quartermaster. I asked Nugent what special service Reynolds had rendered, as he had not been in Mexico at all, to entitle him to promotion. "Why he has always carried his *recruits* to the polls to vote for Forney's Democratic friends." And thus it was; and on the 5th of August Reynolds was appointed "to take the field." Reynolds was a genial fellow, and "took the field" by remaining in Philadelphia until the spring of 1848, when he went to Matamoras to bring some mules to the States.

Lieut. Derby, alias John Phoenix, alias John P. Squibob, that prince of humorists, and I had now located ourselves on Fourteenth Street, near Willard's, expecting to have a pleasant time during the coming winter, when one day about the 8th of September a messenger from the War Department brought me a note asking me if I was able to go to the arsenal at Troy, N. Y., to select a six-gun field battery, caissons, harness, etc., all complete, and take it with me, by way of the lakes and canal, to Cincinnati, Ohio.

I replied that I would leave immediately. While at Troy I met Gen. Wool. He had come home from Buena Vista. He had some friends to meet me at a dining, and I remember his pun on a young lady to whom I was presented, "Miss Hart, one of *deer* family." The battery was shipped on a canal boat to Buffalo. I went by train. Stopped in Rochester all night. The next morning, October 16, the ground was covered with snow, which made me apprehensive that the navigation by canal would close in Ohio before I could reach there. When the steamer arrived at Cleveland the water had been let out of the canal, so we went on to Toledo. From there I went on to Cincinnati by passenger boat. I was the only passenger, except local ones getting on and off along the route. Toledo was no town at all, and the sidewalks were "paved" with gunwales of barge boats, and here and there a plank, and the mud!

I remained in Cincinnati during the months of November and December idle, awaiting orders. There were many parties given, and the society people were pleasant and accomplished. During the day, however, nearly all the men were busy, and I used to say there were but three young men idle in the city – Grosbeck, Febiger, of the navy, and myself.

Early in January, 1848, Senator J. D. Westcott informed me that the President had appointed me captain and assistant quartermaster, and sent my name, among others, to the Senate for confirmation.

The commission is dated January 12, 1848. I had been in the service only four and a half years and had received six commissions – viz., brevet second lieutenant, United States army; second lieutenant, Third Artillery; brevet first lieutenant, United States army; first lieutenant, Third Artillery; brevet captain, United States army; and captain and assistant quartermaster in the general staff of the army, outranking some officers that had been from twelve to eighteen years in service. The brevets were bestowed for "gallant and meritorious services at the battles of Monterey and Buena Vista, Mexico."

When I was informed of the appointment I went up the river to Brownsville, Pa., thence to Cumberland, Md., by stage. The weather was intensely cold. Snow covered the plains and the mountains, and travel had made the roads very smooth and slippery. In going down Laurel Mountain we barely escaped an accident. The stagecoach, when held back, would swing around on the icy incline and go down sideways, and to prevent this the driver gave reins to the horses and we were descending at a gallop, when turning a point we met an eight-mule team that had the inside track, leaving our driver just a possible space to pass. He measured the space and saw the danger instantly, barely missed the hubs of the enormous wagon, and, as he sheered in behind the wagon, our hind wheel on the right threw down the mountain side a quantity of earth, snow, and rocks. There were nine of us in the coach, which gave us the privilege of stopping at night. A member of the Senate from Missouri was opposed to the delay; he must be in Washington, and so the party was divided. The narrow escape from death settled the matter, for when we got out for supper no one said to the driver: "We will go on to-night."

On arriving in Washington I was ordered to report to Gen. Thomas S. Jesup, Quartermaster General of the army. He received me courteously, but observed in a pleasant manner: "Capt. French, neither you nor Capt. Rufus Ingalls were recommended by me for appointment in my department; you were commissioned over officers that I recommended. Besides, the regulations of the army forbids any officer from becoming a captain and assistant quartermaster until he has been *five years* in service, and neither of you have been in the army five years."

It was suggested to him that experience was a slow but very good teacher; that one of his last appointees had not been in the field, while Capt. Ingalls and I had served nearly two years in Mexico, and from experience had derived some knowledge of the duties of officers of the department which should overbalance length of years of service in garrison at home, and that we should not be condemned before trial.

It is a remarkable fact that Gen. Ingalls was retained, from the beginning to the end of the war, as the chief quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac under its many commanders. It is proof of his great administrative ability.

## CHAPTER VIII

Ordered to New Orleans – Baton Rouge – Col. W. W. S. Bliss – Maj. J. H. Eaton – Maj. R. S. Garnett – Taylor Nominated for President – Return to New Orleans – Ordered to Vicksburg – "Gen." McMacken, the Prince of Landlords – Bishop Polk – Sent to Mobile – Regular Army at East Pascagoula, Miss. – Gen. Twiggs and His Fiancée – Sail for Galveston – Galveston – Houston – Austin – Troops Sent to Establish Posts, now Cities – San Antonio – Death of Gen. Worth – El Paso – Return to San Antonio – New Orleans – Call on Gen. Twiggs – Twiggs and Tree – Sword Presented to Me – Dine at the President's – Death of President Taylor – Fillmore President – Capt. Ringgold, U. S. N. – Ordered to Louisville – Return to Washington – Col. Joseph Taylor – Gen. W. O. Butler – Maj. Gaines – Cincinnati – Salmon P. Chase.

I was ordered to report for duty to Col. D. D. Tompkins in New Orleans, and remained there some three months. From that city I was put on duty at Baton Rouge, La., where Gen. Taylor and his family were living at the barracks. Of his staff, Col. Bliss, Maj. Eaton, and Capt. R. S. Garnett were with him. One day I was walking down town with Mrs. Taylor and her daughter Bettie, when a steamer landed, and brought the news of the General's nomination for President. Mrs. Taylor expressed regret that he was nominated; said "he had honors enough;" but added, however, "Since he has become a candidate, I hope he will be elected, and if he be, I will not preside at the White House."

From Baton Rouge I went to New Orleans; thence to Vicksburg, Miss., July 4, 1848, to muster out of service the regiment of Mississippi riflemen commanded by Col. Reuben M. Davis. We lived at the Prentiss House, kept by that prince of landlords, Gen. McMacken, who always "cried" his bill of fare. He said that when he kept a hotel in Jackson, Miss., he was obliged to do so, because so many of the members of the Legislature at that time could not read the printed ones, and he continued it to the day of his death. He was exceedingly pleasing in manners. On one occasion, seeing a gentleman of a commanding presence enter the dining room and seat himself at the table, he welcomed him with: "Good morning, general." "That is not my title, sir." "Ah, excuse me, judge." "Mistaken again, sir." "Well, bishop, what will you be helped to?" "Why do you call me bishop?" "Because I am sure that you stand at the head of your profession, whatever it may be." That gentleman was Bishop Leonidas Polk, afterwards a Confederate general.

During the summer and fall there was yellow fever in Mobile and New Orleans; but no one regarded it, except to leave the cities at night if possible; during the day business went on as usual.

On my return to New Orleans I was ordered to Mobile, Ala., to take charge of government property, and to muster out a company of Alabama cavalry. This finished, I was kept there awaiting orders. In the meantime the army from Mexico had returned, and was encamped at East Pascagoula, and in September I was ordered there.

The evening I arrived there was a ball given at the hotel. I met there a young, tall, and pretty lady from Mobile, with whom I was acquainted. She personated the morning star. Leaving the "floor," she took a seat on a sofa beside Gen. Twiggs, and I seated myself on the other side of her. She declined several sets, and I remained talking with her. All the while the General said but a few words. The windows were open, and I felt some one on the gallery pull my hair. I went out to ascertain the meaning of it. Two or three officers came up, and said: "French, don't unpack your trunk; you will be ordered away in the morning. Don't you know that young lady is Gen. Twiggs's fiancée? He is as jealous as a Barbary cock." I mention this because of something hereafter.

I remained in Pascagoula until the army had been sent hither and thither, according to the wants of the service. The last shipment of troops was some cavalry to Galveston, and I followed on after

them, last of all, in an old propeller. It so happened, as I was leaving the wharf, that a captain of a vessel had just made an observation of the sun to get the time, and I set my watch by it. When we got out on the gulf a cyclone came on. The ship had no chronometer, and only anthracite coal, which made but little steam. The propeller was now spinning in the air; then motionless when under water. Finally the captain had to run before the wind to the south.

Some days after, when running north, we saw land, and made observations. I got the longitude from my watch. It said thirty miles from Galveston. The captain said that the land was the mouth of the Sabine river. Two hours after, we saw the shipping in Galveston, proving my observation correct. The wind was still blowing hard. No pilot boat could come out for us. It was a government ship, and I ordered the captain to make the harbor. The trouble was to find the outer buoy. Finally it was discovered, and we got in safely.

Gen. Twiggs had been assigned to the Department of Texas, and I found him in Houston. We remained there a few days; and, when the dragoons started for Austin, Twiggs, his aid, Capt. W. T. H. Brooks, and I took the stage for Austin also. It had been raining all day and all night when we started. From Houston to a small mound on the prairie twenty-five miles on the road the land was all under water, and still it rained. We crossed the Brazos river about noon, and went on in the rain, which continued all night. At 2 A.M. the driver turned out of the road, and down went the coach till the body was on the ground. The driver said that there was a farmhouse about four miles farther on. A horse was unhitched, and Gen. Twiggs was put on it bareback to ride to the house. Two passengers went on foot. I had in a satchel \$5,000 in gold (government funds), which was in the box under the hind seat. Brooks said that he would stay there and guard it, if I would go on and get help. I also mounted a horse and overtook the General. When we reached the house, the farmer got up, had a fire made to dry our clothing, and agreed to send some mules to bring in the coach. The General made so many abusive remarks about Texas and the people that the farmer got mad, and said that the stage might "stay where it was;" but when he was satisfied that the remarks made by Twiggs were not personal, he started the servants for the coach. The General and I had to rest in the one bed the best we could.

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