

Mexican war
Diary of
Lt. Simon B. Buckner

Began 9th of May 1846

* Note pages 38-40 for
description of the Mexican
"naciondado"

page 51 - Lt Burwell - a
classmate (1844)

* page 60
Lt. Tom Cuth, another classmate (?)
& Father McElroy a chaplain
of the Jesuit order -

On the 19th of May 1846, I was on a short visit to the City of N. York, for the purpose of making preparations for a pedestrian tour which I was contemplating through some of the N. England States. I was, at the time, on duty as an assistant Professor in the Department of Ethics &c. at the Military Academy at West Point, and could be entitled, at the termination of the approaching examination in June, to a leave of absence until about the 1st of the next September. I contemplated passing this leave, principally, in wandering as a pedestrian, through the classic ground of the highlands of the Hudson, and up the beautiful valley of the Connecticut River to the wild mountain scenery of N. Hampshire, and along the picturesque shores of Lake George. I had visited the City with the object of making preparation for this tour; but I was diverted from my purpose by hearing from the shrill voices of the New-borns the oft-repeated cries "Extra Herald!" "War with Mexico!!" "20,000 Mexicans across the Rio Grande!!" These warlike cries intelligence sufficed, at once, to banish from my thoughts every idea of the peaceful journeyings which I had expected to find make amongst the quiet scenes of N. England: and my imagination, from being busied amidst the mouldering ruins of Ticonderoga, turned to the consideration of the scenes of absorbing interest which were enacting

on our southern frontier. I returned at once to West Point, and made an immediate application ^{to be attached to} the "Army of Occupation". After a good deal of difficulty, I succeeded in obtaining the sanction of the authorities ~~of the Academy~~ to my application; and received on the 19th May, the orders which relieved me from duty ~~at~~ the Military Academy, and directed me to report ~~for duty with~~ ^{to} my Company, ^{Regiment}. Though the Company ("I" 2nd Infantry) to which I was attached had not yet been ordered to the seat of War, I had ~~taken~~ ^{getting into} one step towards the field by being ^{directed} ~~ordered~~ to join it. On the same evening that I received my orders I bade adieu to my many friends at West Point, and was soon afterwards ~~gliding~~ ^{gliding} on board a steamer which was gliding swiftly up the Hudson ~~under the~~ ^{dark} shadow of the ^{dark} mountains which frowned darkly upon the waters.

On the morning of the 21st I reached ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~eastern~~ ^{the} ~~entrance of~~ ^{the} ~~Lake Ontario~~ ^{Lake Ontario}. ~~The scenes which were associated with my first naval~~

~~Sections of army life.~~ I was not sorry to get back once more ~~to~~ ^{at} Madison Barracks: for it was ^{as a spot} associated with many a ~~happy~~ ^{happy} recollection of army life, and with some of the happiest ~~recollections~~ ^{recollections} of my existence.

But ^{at} those who had in other days rendered it so pleasant, ^{a residence} ~~and~~ ^{to} me were gone, an element of sadness was mingled with my brightest enjoyments. For all that I saw around me brought freshly back to my mind

The recollection of the "joys that were past"; and the memory of these though ever pleasant, leaves yet a tinge of melancholy on the soul. The places I had so often visited with pleasure, being no longer cheered by the presence of those who had ^{formerly} ~~entwined~~ them, looked dreary and desolate, and ^{had} ~~lost~~ for ~~me~~ the charm they had once possessed for me.

It was almost a relief to me then, when I received orders to repair to N. York for the purpose of accompanying thence a detachment of recruits for the Army ~~on the~~ which had ^{recently} ~~just then~~ occupied Matamoros on the Rio Grande.

On Monday, the 28th June, I bade adieu ~~once~~ again to my friends at Madison Barracks, and retracing my route was soon descending the Hudson. Stopping for a few hours at West Point, I had an opportunity of exchanging greetings with my friends there, amongst whom was Lieut. S. W. Smith of the Eng. Corps. I reached N. York on the morning of the 1st July, and reported my arrival to Col. Bankhead 2nd Artillery, Commanding at Governors Island.

The detachment which I was to accompany not ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ yet being ready to embark, I was employed during my ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ detention at the island ~~and in rendering assistance~~ in giving instruction to the recruits preparatory to ^{their} going into the field.

During my stay at the island I had to express on the hospitality of Lieut. E. B. Hunt of the Eng. Corps,

in whose quarters I made my abode; and ~~of~~ ^{on} the kindness of the officers of the 2nd Artillery mess who tendered me a seat at their hospitable board.

I had an opportunity while stationed on the island of witnessing for the first time the ~~noise~~ excitement attending the great Anniversary in N. York city. Though the rain poured in torrents almost the whole day, ~~a very most unusual for the fourth of July, the noise and~~ ^{a very most unusual for the fourth of July,} the noise was almost deafening. Towards evening the sky cleared up and the display of fireworks at night, as I viewed it from the ~~paramounts~~ of Castle Williams was highly creditable to the patriotism of the goodly citizens of Gotham.

Pent up as I was ~~in this little island~~, and eager as an untired sub. could ^{well} ~~be~~ ^{to} get into the "anted field", I did not pass ^{any} ~~so~~ ^{happy} a sojourn within the contracted limits of this little island. Yet it was a relief to ^{the} eye and to the mind, ~~(to watch the beating of the surge along the shore, as the restless billows rolled up from the ocean)~~ ^{to look around from the works of Old Castle, on the beautiful bay, covered with the sails of every nation which spread around the remotest seas} coming, richly freighted, with the productions of every clime. And it was soothing to listen, as the shades of evening stole over the ~~distant city~~ ^{scene}, to the softend sounds which came over the waters from the distant city, and to the steady rippling of the waves as they ceaselessly ~~beated~~ ^{beated} ~~sullenly~~ ^{sullenly} against the ~~beaten~~ ^{beaten} shore; and ~~of~~ ^{the} ~~song~~ ^{song} which of the ~~ocean~~ ^{ever-restless ocean}.

At length the good ship "Norman", Capt. Spavin, was chartered and fitted up for our detachment. About noon on the 13th of July, ~~as the steamer~~ we marched aboard a steamer at the wharf

of Governor's island; and amidst the cheers of those who were left behind, ~~we~~ were borne away to the vessel which was awaiting us in the bay. The detachment consisted of Lieut. W. B. Blair, 2nd Art., Capt. 2nd Lt. M. B. Buckner, 2nd Inf., and Capt. 2nd Lt. W. D. Smith 2nd Dragoons, with 200 hundred recruits destined for the different arms of the service. The ~~detachment~~ ^{we} were soon transferred ~~from the steamer~~ to our vessel; and having raised our anchors ~~we~~ were ^{in a short time} ~~soon~~ moving down the bay in tow of the steamer. Being second in rank the Commissariat duties devolved upon me; and for some time after getting under way I was busied ~~between~~ below deck in assigning the men to quarters. When I came on deck it was late in the afternoon and the ~~steamer~~ ^{we} had passed the "Marrows" which form the entrance to N. Y. harbour. The steamer had just cast ^{us} loose, and we were unfurling our canvass and spreading our white sails to the wind. A gentle breeze which was ^{gradually} ~~filling~~ them, and urging us past the prominent point of Sandy Hook into the ocean. The spires of the distant receding city, and the forest of masts which crowded the spacious harbour were fast disappearing in the distance. The southern shore of Long island was stretching far off to the east; the long line of the Jersey shore was sinking gradually away to the south; the agreeable

6 ~~Staten island~~

the agreeable

undulations and diversified features of Staten island were growing indistinct as we were leaving them behind us; while the blue outline of the distant New York mountains was beginning to blend with the varying tints which ^{the western horizon} painted, with a succession of beautiful colours. The vast expanse of ocean opened before us, crowded with ^{vessels whose} ~~many white sails~~ ^{which} were skimming in every direction over ~~the surface~~, some with their gay streamers fluttering near us; others bearing proudly past us towards the city; and others still whose topsails only could be seen, as they ⁽¹⁾ ~~shone~~ & (2) ~~reflected~~ back the ^{bright light} ~~glare~~ of the declining sun, and (1) appeared to rise gradually ^{above} ~~out of~~ the waters.

We bore proudly out ^{to sea} ~~into the ocean~~. The sun ^{slowly} ~~set~~ ^{behind} the far-off New York and diffused ~~the~~ ^{the evening glow on} around us the magic charms of twilight. The distant shore faded gradually away and was finally lost in the obscurity ~~which~~ of night. The white sails which had shone so brightly around us disappeared, one by one, from our view; and with the exception of one bright light which long gleamed over the waters, and marked a distant spot of land, there was nothing which in sight to remind us of ^{the proximity} ~~the vicinity~~ of man. I long watched this beacon as it grew less and less brilliant: and finally even this ~~beacon~~ ^{had disappeared} ~~from~~ ^{behind} our view, and seemed extinguished in the ^{hungry} ~~dark~~ waves that rolled ^{darkly} ~~darkly~~ between us. - The moon rose above

the waters and "Cast her mild and tender light" around: ~~but her rays were reflected only by the~~ ^{upon the} ~~rolling~~ ^{rolling} billows. - I was where I had often wished to be, - alone in the trackless bosom of the deep, listening to the loud anthems of Ocean as he sang the praises of Creation beneath the soft light of Heaven.

On the following morning I looked around from the deck of our good ship, but no vestige of land was visible. The morning was bright, and ^{discovered} ~~lighted~~ up some 5 or 6 sails which appeared at different distances around us, skimming over the beautiful surface of the waters. The wind was not fair; but blew so freshly as to dash the white-caps most gracefully around us.

But soon the sky was overcast; the dark clouds rolled over us, and in the afternoon burst in torrent of rain, forcing us to shelter ourselves in the cabin. As evening approached the wind suddenly died away, there was a cessation of the hitherto steady rippling about the bows, the unfurled sails dropped sluggishly and hung lazily to the masts; - or responded only to the heavy rolling of the vessel upon the billows, by flapping mournfully against the masts. We were becalmed!

In the morning of the 15th I was awakened by being almost thrown from my ~~bed~~ ^{by the} ~~heavy~~ ^{increased motion} rolling of the vessel, and the loud commands of the gallant "skipper" as he ^{directions for the} ~~gave~~ ^{manoeuvring} this ship. When I stepped on deck, it was as much as my unpractised

8 feet could do to maintain a hold on the planks which seemed constantly sliding from under me. But when I ~~started~~^{supported} myself ^{against} the bulwarks, and looked around on the troubled waters, and on the clear blue sky so placidly sweet; and my eyes were dazzled by the glorious light of the ~~bright~~ sun which, without a cloud to shadow his bright face, seemed to smile on the fury of the waves, - I beheld a scene which was more than beautiful; ~~and might well be classified~~ ^{it was one of lonely grandeur: -} for not a sail met the searching glance as ^{the eye} vainly strove to ~~find~~^{rest upon} ~~catch~~ something which might indicate the vicinity of others, wandering, like ourselves, over that "track of trod, that never leaves a trace behind." ~~The morning~~ rapidly ^{significantly} into the Gulf Stream. The deep blue which is a marked characteristic of the ^{which eye had entered,} Gulf Stream, contrasted most strikingly with the ^{foaming} white-caps which were ^{incessantly} rolling, ~~around us~~ and breaking, and disappearing around us, and they were ^{then} succeeded by others which ~~were~~ beautiful and had as fleeting an existence.

The scene was new to me; and I was in a happy mood to enjoy its novelty. My heart was light when I ~~embarked~~^{fulfilled}; and ^{was} filled ^{with} all happy emotions. I was embarking in a cause which gave bright promise for the future; and ^I was not without a strong incentive to worthy action. The hopes of others were with me; and ^{only} but the day before ^{I embarked} sailing a sweet hope ^{forward} was awakened in my own breast which looked to a happy consummation ~~from the future~~. Pleasantly then, did the hours ~~fly~~, and ^{sweet} night came

the recollections of the past, and bright were the thoughts which looked with confidence to the future to crown ~~my~~ aspirations after happiness.

From an observation taken at noon on this day we discovered that we were in Lat. 38° N. and about the long. of N. Y. City.

As our good vessel sped onward many of the wonders of the deep were successively revealed to ^{me}. Standing one day on the deck ^{by} the "skipper" was called my attention to two moving objects protruding at intervals above the surface of the water, and I recognised at once a specimen of the whale - that apparently unwieldy inhabitant of the deep.

Now and then a "school" of porpoises, ^{fat & sleek,} would play about the ^{ship} ~~vessel~~, ^{leaps} throwing themselves ~~sleek~~ ^{half} out of the water in mere wantonness. Occasionally a white speck would be seen on the horizon: it would enlarge until the topsails of a distant ^{vessel} were discernible; and then descending on the opposite side of the convexity between us would sink entirely from ~~their~~ view.

It was a beautiful sight to look upon a vessel near us tossing on a heavy sea. Now, her bows would rise aloft on the swelling wave, and, poised a moment on its summit, would plunge, as the wave passed on, down the opposite slope, ^{and dash heavily against that which succeeded.} ~~or if she were moving obliquely to the direction of these meeting ridges~~

Favoured by a brisk breeze, our good ship sped

rapidly onwards through the deep blue waters of the Gulf Stream. At noon on the 16th, we were in lat. 36° N. Long. 74° W., and nearly ~~off~~ ^{rapidly} the Capes of Carolina. The ~~force~~ ^{direction} of the current of the great stream varies, in this part ~~of its course~~, from one to several miles an hour; and as its course ~~is directed~~ ^{is directed} well out into the Atlantic, ~~there is~~ a vessel going south is apt to be swept ~~from~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} eastward of her proper track. Fortunately for us, the breeze which swelled our sails, continued, ^{without stopping,} to urge us rapidly across the broad ~~the~~ current, until we had nearly attained the southern limit of the stream. But no sooner were we fairly across ~~this sweeping current~~, than we reached a zone which never fails to exercise, in the most trying manner, the patience of all mariners who attempt to traverse these regions. We were in the famed "Horse Latitudes", so celebrated for calms, squalls, and light baffling winds. The name is said to have been derived ^{from} ^{the feet of} the great ~~maritime~~ ^{formerly} losses sustained in these seas, by the Charleston merchants who were engaged in an extensive traffic of cattle with the West India islands. Being ~~subjected~~ ^{subjected} in this part of their course, to many delays, resulting often in the loss of the greater portion of their animals, the ~~space~~ ^{space} of water for some distance northward of the Bahama was soon become celebrated as the "Horse Latitudes".

No sooner did our vessel enter this enchanted ~~space~~, than we, ^{perceived} at once to encounter all its annoyances. The breeze ~~at once~~ deserted our sails, the billows subsided into

a long and heaving swell, the clouds began to flit uneasily across the sky and to burst upon us in fitful "squalls" of wind and drenching showers. Sometimes a gentle breeze would ^{disrupt} ~~fall~~ our sails, the sun would burst forth in tropical brightness, the rippling of our bows would mark our course through the water, and we would be flattered by the hope of soon leaving far behind us this dread waste of waters. Illusive hope! Suddenly the sails hang ^{a close & suffocating heat oppresses us, and} loosely against the mast; the heavy, ~~sunlit~~ glassy swell of the ocean rocks us gently to and fro. Then a small cloud is seen on the horizon; it gradually enlarges on the sight, the water is darkened by its moving shadow, and its glassy surface broken into ripples by the passing shower and the accompanying wind. Unexpectedly the "squall" strikes us, our ship careens to one side, all hands are busied to right her, and prepare for an encounter with the elements, when, suddenly she lifts her side from the water, the waves rock her gently as before, the deck is drenched with a sudden ^{fall} ~~pour~~ of rain, and the "squall" ~~is~~ ^{passes} away in a succeeding shower which sets a double arch of brilliant colours in the heavens!

~~I cannot forget recording here a phenomenon which I witnessed somewhat later in the voyage.~~

As we advanced to ^{ward} the south, I saw for the first time the ^{pinpoint} flying-fish, which would rise from the water about the bows of the vessel, and with distended wings

~~and~~ glittering in the sunlight ^{like} ~~the~~ ~~bright~~
~~plumage~~ of the sportive butterfly, would skip
 from wave to wave over the deep, and ^{finally} plunge
 again into the waters. (Insert from p. 13, line 7.)

But of all the living creatures I saw during
 the voyage, none impressed me ^{with} ~~more~~ more
 interest ~~and~~ or gave a wider field for the play of the
 imagination ^{that lonely wanderer over the restless bosom of the deep} than the "stormy petrel", - the "Mother
 Cary's chicken" of the weather-beaten Tar. It is
 a brownish coloured bird, with a small white spot
 on each wing and on its tail; and its body is
 but little heavier than that of the ~~hawk~~, but its
 wings are disproportionately large, and its feet webbed
 like aquatic birds.

An interest amounting to a feeling of superstition
 invests, in the ^{mind} ~~eye~~ of the common sailor, these
 singular birds. Their strange and almost mysterious
 movements, are calculated, indeed, to awaken in minds
 so disposed to dwell upon the marvellous, a feeling
 of awe and, in certain cases, almost of fear. They
 seem to fly incessantly over the ocean without wearying,
 and appear never to rest. Hovering ^{unceasingly} along in
 the wake of the vessel, their feet resting upon the
 heaving surface of the tossing billows, and their bodies
 poised upon their outstretched wings, they feed eagerly
 upon the crumbs which ~~fall from~~ are thrown into
 the sea.

It is in the twilight hour, especially, that these
 little birds gather ^{in the greatest numbers} ~~about the vessel~~. To see them
 flitting around the vessel at a time which invests

every thing with an air of solemnity, and to hear them mingling their melancholy chirpings with the minstrelsy of the ocean, we can hardly wonder that the sailor fancies them the spirits of departed comrades lingering still over the ^{wild} element they once loved so well. ~~So~~ ^{fixed} is this superstition ^{skip below}

(Insert at page 12 after line 4.)

Sometimes a ravenous shark, would be seen swimming about the vessel, as if in expectance of his prey; - or a "school" of dolphins would glide rapidly along in the wake of the ship and dart quickly at any bright object which might be suspended to allure them to their ^{treacherous} ~~vast~~ ~~and~~ ~~common~~. Several of these beautiful fishes were thus captured, ^{and} ~~thrown~~ ^{as the gleets} ~~as the agonies of death~~ came over them while floundering on the deck, their pangs were almost forgotten by the lookers on, in ^{the brilliant truth of the} ~~the magical play of colours~~ ^{assured by} ~~which came over~~ the dying fishes, as the magical play of colours marked the ⁽¹⁾ ~~ebb of life~~.
 (1) "The last still loveliest."

from above + ^{in his round} ~~trous~~ that nothing would induce him to offer the slightest molestation to these little wanderers lest he might thereby call down upon his vessel the vengeance of the departed.

After beating about the "horse latitude" for some days longer, our eyes finally rested, about two weeks after leaving New York, on the desolate coast of Abaco, the N. western island of the

Bahama group. The breakers which were beating furiously against the distant shore and dashing high up on the rough rocks, warned us of the dangerous nature of the navigation in this vicinity. The rapidity of the Gulf Stream is so great as it sweeps through the narrowed channel between Florida and the Bahamas, as to force sail-vessels to seek a different track around the S. Eastern point of Abaco into Providence channel, and along the N. Western edge of the great and little Isaac's, and Deadman's "Keys," - where the force of the current is comparatively small. Vessels of light burden - even small ships, may pass, in clear weather, directly across the Bahama Banks, leaving the above named keys entirely to the westward. This ^{of sand & clay, includes} great Bank ~~extends~~ an immense area, - extending from Providence Channel nearly to the Coast of Cuba; and is covered only by a depth of eleven to fifty, and a hundred feet of water. In many places ^{its} rocky ~~surface~~ ^{cones} within three or four feet of the surface of the water; and sometimes protruding above it form small rocky islands called "Keys". Those alluded to above, being situated along the edge of the "Gulf", as the stream is usually denominated by the sailors, subserve an excellent purpose in marking out the Channel and in affording sites for light-houses, which the enterprise of the British Government has constructed on these desolate spots.

As our ship was of too heavy draft to admit of

her passing over the banks, we turned at right angles around the remarkable termination of the S.E. point of Abaco, "the hole in wall"; and followed, in a western direction, the course of Providence Channel.

The "Hole in the wall" is so named from an ^{arched} aperture opened by nature, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, ~~though a long~~ and ^{and not very elevated} narrow rock that projects ~~for more than that distance~~ ^{for nearly half a mile} from the island into the water and forms the S.E. termination of the island. ~~Which~~ seems to be entirely uninhabited except by the keepers of the light-house ~~at~~ this point. Indeed, not only this island but all others in view seemed sterile, and uninhabitable; ~~but little elevated~~ ^{but slightly} out of the sea, and affording, on the alternately rocky and sandy surface, scarcely soil enough to support a few dwarfish bushes, which ~~scarcely sufficed~~ seemed ~~only~~ to mock of the desolation around.

As we were slowly making our way ^{in a smooth sea} along the western end of Providence Channel, we observed a small boat with two persons putting off towards us from one of those cheerless wastes of sand that stretch along on the southern side. Upon a near approach we recognized them as two English Negroes on a fishing excursion with their little bark whose masts we could see at a distance, and which appeared, by following the labyrinthine mazes of these secondary channels, to have wound itself into ~~the very midst of~~ the sand banks. One effected a mutually satisfactory exchange of

commodities; - they going their way rejoicing, with a supply of hard bread and salt meat; and me pronouncing turtle soup the order of the day, in the culinary department, for the rest of the voyage.

As we drew near the Gulf stream we approached close under the "Great Knobs" to avoid being swept by the rapid current around the western part of Abaco.

There was the slightest possible breeze stirring, - scarcely not enough to ~~give the least motion~~ ^{fill the sails}; and though there was a slight swell on the ocean, the waves were of a glassy smoothness. I had an excellent opportunity in this position to test, ~~with~~ ^{by} my own experience, the remarkable ^{transparency} ~~clearness~~ of the water. It was beautiful, and it was fearful, to look down as I did, and see through the clear water, ^{the bed of} "merchant-mariner rocks", and even small stones which were lying at the bottom at a depth of fifty or, I believe, even eighty or more feet. ~~It is in portions of this nature that~~

The difference of colour in the water on these soundings when compared to the unfathomable depths of the ocean is striking; and the line ^{marks the} ~~which~~ divides them as ^{we} sail along, the edge of the "Gulf" is at once distinguishable. ~~I know not~~ ^{I know not} which most to admire, the beautiful, vivid green of which is met ^{with} on the ~~forwards~~ ^{fore}, or the beautiful, indescribably deep blue of the rest of ^{the} ocean.

Fortunately, as we entered the edge of the Gulf stream, a brisk breeze sprang ~~suddenly~~ up and snatched out our flapping sails; and under the influence of this welcome visitor ~~from~~ ^{soon} the "Trader", we ~~ploughed~~ ^{ploughed} along at a merry rate through the foaming sea. On the following day it was our lot to participate

in one of those mournful ceremonies ^{from} which the
travellers of the ^{ocean} Deep are not always exempt;— we
~~While the vessel lay to on her course,~~ committed
to the deep the ^{dead body} ~~remains~~ of one of our soldiers, and
by a singular coincidence, just opposite Deadman's
Keys. ~~Kept in his shroud of sail-cloth,~~ While the
vessel lay to on her course, the sublime services
of the Church were read over his mortal remains
which were shrouded in their winding sheet of
sail-cloth; and with a heavy plunge the body sank
beneath the waves; the sails were again unfurled, and
again we sped rapidly on our course.

On the morning of the 30th July we came in
view of the "Pan" ^{on the northern coast of Cuba, and part} of Matanzas ~~within the high peaks of~~
the interior of the ~~"Bay of the Antilles"~~ ^{islands of Cuba} showing their
peaks in the dimness of the distance. I now for
the first time beheld this "gem of the Antilles", the
pride of old Spain, and the chief bulwark of her
~~declining~~ ^{waning} greatness. ~~Whether~~ ^{first} from the recollection
of the ~~first~~ stories of its ~~settlement~~ ^{first} discovery by
the immortal Colon, or of its subsequent settlement, or
of the pictures which fancy paints of the grandeur of
or ~~from the belief in the "Antilles"~~ ^{of its ~~being~~ ~~some day~~ ~~being~~ ~~our own~~}
viceregal domination, ~~I~~ ^I viewed this fair island with
feelings of no common interest. ~~With~~ ^{Impelled by} a favourable
breeze we continued rapidly to approach the beautiful
shores; and sailing along for many hours within
plain view, I saw for the first time, the rich foliage of

18/ The tropics spreading ~~out~~ over hill and valley. As the day began to decline we came in view of the time-worn walls of the Morro, and of the stronger fortifications which guard the eminences in ~~the~~ rear, and look down from the chain of heights upon the ^{beautiful} ~~ancient~~ city of the Havanna. The Morro Castle, the oldest and most famed of all these works, is a strong battery with several tiers of guns, rising out of the water at the narrow entrance of the harbour and looking out upon the sea. It ^{together with the Cabanas,} was rebuilt and greatly enlarged after its restoration by the English in 1763. About the same time the fortresses of San Carlos and Stares were first erected; and a continuous wall constructed about the city. A powerful water-battery is situated on the opposite side of the entrance from the ^{is built} Morro, ~~and~~ defensive relations with that work, and also sweeps with its fire the anchorage without. ~~The defence of the entrance, which is so narrow that two vessels of war could scarcely enter abreast, is perfect.~~ ^{is perfectly protected by this cross-fire: for no} narrow is it at this point that, although there is capacity in the Harbour for a thousand ships of war, scarcely two large vessels ~~could~~ enter abreast. — The strongest of all the fortresses seems that which crowns the summit of the gently sloping hill that rises in rear of the Morro; and not only sweeps with its fire the natural glacier that descends with singular uniformity towards the N. and E.; but also looks down ~~upon~~ upon the city in rear, and upon the Morro and the intermediate castle, with which it ^{appears to be} connected by defended

in sailing past the harbor 19

Communications. ^{as well as I could judge from a ~~hazy~~ ^{glazed} ~~plaid~~} This summit is elevated perhaps two hundred or three hundred feet above the Morro; and is perhaps three fourths of a mile in rear of it. On the western and southern side of the city, I could occasionally perceive portions of the continuous wallicrete; and ~~detached~~ ^{also} what appeared to be ^{either} detached ^{or bastions} ~~works~~, ^{give it} added to, ~~strengthen it~~

One had been favoured with a bright and glorious day. A pleasant breeze which had been ~~continually~~ ^{swelling} ~~long and over the deep~~ our sails, so ^{moderated} ~~tempered~~ the tropical heat that the temperature was delightful even at mid-day. But when the sun was just sinking behind the western waves,

"Not as in northern climes, obscurely bright,

But one unclouded blaze of living light;" and ^{way} throwing "his yellow beams" o'er the washed waters of the rolling deep, it was almost ethereal.

It was just at this witching hour of ~~perfect~~ ^{perfect} day, when the long stream of golden light was pouring its dying radiance over ~~over~~ this island of perennial bloom, that we were just opposite the ^{entrance} ~~entrance~~ to this harbour, ~~and~~ within half a mile of the shore ~~and~~

Through this narrow ^{opening} ~~entrance~~ could be seen the masts of the shipping which crowded the beautiful harbour, and the ^{stateli} ~~antique~~ structures of the lovely city. The flag of old Spain waved proudly over the stern walls of the Morro, as they rose from their bed of

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rock; and its colours still gleamed in the sunlight which ~~still~~ played about the ramparts of the strong fortresses ~~which~~ crowned the neighbouring heights. The white beach extended ^{in either direction} along the shore, as far as the eye could reach. Above it rose ~~an~~ terraces, a country of beautiful undulations, covered with the fruits ^{and} and rich foliage of the tropics, and intersected by ~~lovely valleys which were~~ ^{now and then} refreshed by the cool waters of some ~~meandering~~ ^{of some purifying brook} ~~while~~ the balmy atmosphere of this ~~particular~~ ^{delightful} region ~~came to~~ ^{came to} ~~our~~ ^{pay} ~~ment~~ ^{ment} with the sweet incense of ^{ever-blooming} flowers. Beyond these were seen the mountain range which rises in the interior to the height of near two thousand feet; and whose ^{distant} peaks now bathed in the ~~soft~~ ^{melting} light of the evening, seemed to blend with the ~~deep~~ ^{tailed} azure of the sky. Viewed at any time, this scene which combines so many objects of beauty, ^{excite sensations, that} ~~must necessarily~~ ^{prove} ~~be~~ ^{dashing}; but when ~~seen~~ in the ~~soft~~ ^{soft} light of a tropical sunset; when the shades of evening are stealing ~~with~~ ^{magi-} cally over the landscape,

"Leaving that beautiful which still was so;
And making that which was not;"

~~who will venture to describe the impressions which~~
it leaves behind cannot be adequately described.

At length the last beams of daylight were extinguished in the crester waves, and night spread ~~its~~ ^{its} shadowy mantle over this land of the sun. As our ship sailed ^{silently} ~~majestically~~ along, the distant hills melted away in the heavens; the orange-groves receded from our view; and the dark battlements of the Morro were blended with the gathering gloom of night. ~~The~~ ^{many} ~~king~~ ^{the} ~~bright~~

-light which shone from the ramparts of the (21)
Morro ~~was~~ ^{disappeared} ~~behind the waves~~ we were again
alone upon the waters, and directing our course
to the Westward across the middle ~~of~~ the great Mexican
Gulf. (Here follows par. at line 12 p. 23)

Our voyage from Havana continued prosperous.
The wind was constantly fair, and generally blew
a fresh breeze which urged us onwards at the rate
of 5 or 8 knots per hour. For only a portion of
one or two days was there the slightest cessation of
this favourable wind; and then we were more than
compensated for the slight detour ~~which~~ it caused
~~the opportunity which it afforded of continuing~~
us, by ~~the occurrence of~~ one of those rare phenomena
of which I had never before heard; and which occur-
red under such ^{a favorable combination of} ~~peculiar~~ circumstances as to heighten its
effect in a remarkable degree. Sailing slowly onwards
towards the West, and almost becalmed, we encountered
one of those transient showers that often sweep over
the Gulf at this period. ~~at~~ The sun was shining brightly
and as the cloud passed ~~by~~ ^{over} its course ~~undisturbed~~ ^{conspicuous} arch
of the brightest colours was set in the heavens, ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~between~~
not only of the primary and secondary bows; but also
of a third one, ~~concentric with either of the others~~
~~and~~ situated between the others and oblique to them both.
This latter could not be traced in its ~~entire~~ course; but on
both sides of the arch, seemed nearly to touch the base of the
primary, and reached almost to the summit of the arch of
the secondary bow. Produced in its entire length it
would probably have been an ellipse tangent to the latter

22) at its highest ^{point}, and to the former at its points of intersection with the horizon. As if this curious phenomenon was not in itself sufficiently beautiful, a ~~great~~ ^{large bark} under full sail appeared at this moment almost directly under the centre of the brilliant arch. (Here follow line 1 page 24.)

~~None so surpassingly beautiful are~~
The ~~surrounding~~ nights on the ocean; when the wide waste of water is spread around you, and the pale moon is ~~shedding her pale light~~ ^{up} the curving waves, ~~and~~ I have sat in the stillness of the evening, when ~~the~~ ^{soft} and balmy atmosphere which succeeds the oppressive heat of a tropical day came in soothing softness to the senses, until I could not consent to descend to the close cabin below; and spreading my blankets on the poop of the ship, ~~gazed beneath the "apparel"~~ ^{the stars and} I have watched the bright moon in the heavens, and the white sails that looked so pure in the pale light of the moon-beams, until the soft whisperings of the night breeze, as it swept through the cordage, sung lullaby and ~~soothed~~ ^{by its monotonous music} ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~me~~ ^{my} ~~repose~~ ^{repose}. Or when the sea has been more rough and our vessel was tossing on the sloping waves, I have hung over her bows, in the still hour of the night, and watched eagerly and curiously the white foam as it was dashed from our pathway and sparkled into a wave of phosphoric light. (Here insert line 9 page 24.)

Page 24. Insert after line 8 page 24.
It is remarkable ~~at~~ ^{at} what great distances land-birds may sometimes be discovered at sea: sitting on the shrouds one evening, when we were near the centre of the Gulf, a little bird, weary and panting with fatigue,

suddenly alighted on my foot, ^{to gain a moment's rest,} and remained for ~~several~~ minutes until frightened by the approach of some of the sailors; when he again took wing and was soon lost to view as he flew away over the water. I should not ^{silently} pass by in silence that ~~singular~~ ^{peculiar} fish, the "Portuguese Man of war," as it is denominated by the sailors. How beautiful he appears on a ~~fine~~ ^{fair} day when the long waves are smelling ~~heavily~~ ^{heavily} in long glassy slopes, ~~and he comes to the surface with his spiral shell, and spreading out his sail to the breeze, and~~ ^{glides} away before the gentle breeze. (Here insert line 7 page 22.)

As we were passing the ~~harbour~~ ^{bay} of Havana, a sloop of war which lay at ~~anchorage~~ ^{anchor} in the roadstead, raised her ^{anchor} and, ~~bearing down~~ ^{in gallant style}, towards our vessel, came within pistol shot on our starboard quarter for the purpose of hailing us. We discovered her to be the U. S. Sloop of War ^{USS} ~~Luxury~~ ^{Luxury}, at few months afterwards lost on the rocks off Japan and her crew captured. She was just from the coast of Mexico, and gave us the information ^{the advance of} that Gen. Taylor's force had moved ~~forward~~ ⁱⁿ from Matamoros towards Camargo.

At length, on the morning ^{when the lead told but a few hundred fathoms} of the 5th of August, the cry of Land! was heard from the mast-head, and ~~in an hour or two~~ ^{in an hour or two} of towards climbing up on the shrouds I discovered over the bows a long line of coast stretching farway towards the north and south, scarcely raised out of the ^{its peaks and distinctive sand-hills} waters, and almost entirely unrefreshed by a trace of verdure.

24/ From a conversation which I subsequently held with Maj.
Geo. H. Thomas, 3rd Art., I learned that a similar phenom-
enon was witnessed by him and others at Potosi St. Paso
Chaparral summer; but in this case the oblique one
was even more brilliant and was prolonged to the
points of tangency. Its obliquity is explained by
the principles of the interference of light. (See *Humboldt's Cosmos* p. 317, note, and *Arago in Annuaire* 1836 p. 300.)

Here follows line 4 fr. bot. of pag. 22.

And when I have been gazing into the depths of
the sky, and fancy has been wandering
through the maze of countless worlds and
systems that pervade universal space, I have
been suddenly startled by the shooting of a
bright meteor which gleamed across the
heavens and recalled, to by a train of pleasing
associations, the halcyon days of my boyhood
passed amongst the hills of my native country.
When the dreams of my school days took upon each
"shooting star" as an extinguished world; and many
and learned have been the consultations amongst
the young astronomers of Crumfordsville, and
many the outbursts of our sympathies when we
pictured to our tender imaginations the dying agonies
of the myriads of unfortunate souls who were hurled
through the measureless depths of space.

26)

the midst of a fleet of twenty or thirty sail, and about three miles from the shore. We were just opposite the mouth of Madre ^(Mother) a shallow lagoon, Channel, which runs up the coast some 20 or 30 miles and cuts off the narrow island Padre ^{from the main} (Father). Four miles from its mouth, which seen the slightly elevated projection of land recently so celebrated as Gen. Taylor's base of operations and depot of supplies, known as Point Isabel; on which ^{under the direction of Capt. John S. Sanborn} was constructed, a miserable field-work called Fort Polk. The mouth of this Channel, embraced between Padre Isd. on the N. and two arms of an island on the S. which extends to the ^{little (Boca chica)} mouth of the Rio Grande and gives ^{its} name to the enclosed waters, forms one of the best of all the indifferent harbours on this coast, and is known as Brazos St. Jago (Arms of St. James). It is a good anchorage for all vessels that can cross the bar; on which there are ^{only} from seven to eight feet of water. As but few of the transports could cross this bar, the Gr. Master's department ^{was reduced to the necessity of} ~~was~~ retaining the services of several small steamers, for the purpose of ~~landing~~ ^{carrying} the ~~stores~~ ^{supplies} and troops. The difficulty and danger attending this process may well be imagined ~~to be considerable~~ when we ^{take into account} consider the tempestuous nature of this coast during the ~~autumn~~ ^{autumn} and winter, and the consequent rudeness of the waves. More than one wreck that strewn the strand ^{attested} ~~proved~~ this fact, and the remains of the U.S. Boat Col. Farney, and of several sail vessels sunk on the bar, ^{indicated} ~~revealed~~ some of the ^{disasters} ~~devastations~~ to be expected on this shore. As I remarked before, the coast looked decidedly inhospitable; and I was to have still better evidence of ^{this fact} ~~it~~ than mere appearances indicated.

The day being fair and the sea comparatively smooth, I volunteered my services to accompany the "skipper" ashore in the jolly boat, and report the arrival of our troops to the commanding officer at Pt. Isabel. ^{The wind had lulled} There was a long swell on the sea, of glassy waves which ~~land~~ rolled in towards the shore, and gently heaved our little boat

to the aloft and allowed us to plunge down a ~~regular~~ long
 declivity of some ~~four~~ or six feet of vertical height. The
 sensation was ~~delightful~~ and ~~we~~ ^{past the rolling vessel} glided ~~through the~~
 and ~~soon~~ ^{approached} ~~near~~ the harbour. ~~But~~ When we were within
 about half a mile of the shore and were ~~flattering~~ ^{ourselves} elated at the prospect of soon touching terra firma
 once more, ~~our position~~ ^{our position} ~~assumed~~ an entirely new
 phase. Suddenly, and when it was too late to come
 about, we were involved amongst the breakers that
 roll furiously over the bar at the entrance of the harbour,
 and dash ^{up} against the white beach. The first intimation
 we received of their severity was our being struck suddenly
 by a wave whose ~~curling crest~~ ^{thrust} us high aloft, dashed
 the two starboard oars from their locks, ^{unsprung} ^{our} ^{ouder}, ^{carried} us almost
 over, and curled - not beautifully, ^{into the boats} ^{our} ^{sides}, and
 passing on, left us ^{with a splash of water} a trough of some twelve or fifteen
 yards wide. The coolness of the gallant veteran skipper, who
 was our helmsman, profited by the few moments interval
^{coming of the next} ~~between the successive waves~~ to right our little craft again;
 and our oarsmen giving ^{way} ^{strong} ^{we} ^{endeavoured} to keep in the trough
 of the sea. Glancing ~~back~~ ^{back} I could almost admire the beauty
 of the ~~huge~~ ^{was roaring and foaming} breaker which ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~crashing~~ ^{crashing} ^{and} ^{leaping} ^{madly} and dashing
 furiously on in chase of us. Scarcely were we righted when
 it struck us fairly astern and deluged us with water; but
 our good boat before she was entirely ^{submerged} ~~submerged~~, rose buoyantly
 to the summit of the wave and struggled hard while the
 curling crest of the breaker was ^{leaping} ^{madly} ~~leaping~~ ^{over} the side ~~into~~
 as it passed on towards the bow. Again we have a moments
 respite. - Pull hard! my ~~lads~~ ^{lads}, hard!! Give way strong!!
 were the constant appeals of the skipper: again we are in a
 trough and another huge breaker, terrible as the last, is
 fast gaining on us, ~~ARR-D!!!~~ ^{ARR-D!!!} ^{My lads!} ^{ARR-D!!!} -
 This in vain; again we are struck; again ~~once~~ ^{once} ~~more~~ ^{more} the
~~are forced~~ ^{are forced} ~~astern~~ ^{astern} is pitched aloft and we are almost thrown
 forward on the bows, and again are we poised for a

moment on the crest of the wave, uncertain if we will not be capsize, and once more the wave rolls on and leaves us less buoyant than before. Now, HARD, my good lads and we are safe!! And manfully did the brawny ~~lads~~ ^{struggle amidst their element} ~~pull at the oars~~, and coolly did our gallant skipper preside at the helm. ~~But~~ ^{we were} ~~though~~ ^{now} through the worst of the furious breakers, we had shipped so much water that our boat pulled heavily, and it required all the ~~force and~~ skill of our Captain's seamanship to conduct us safely through the succeeding waves. But at length we emerged from this roaring, foaming and maddened sea into the smooth harbour. The danger was passed; but our gallant little craft was nearly half filled with water, while we were thoroughly wet and dripping, from our ~~plunging~~ ^{briny drenching} ~~in the briny elements~~. The skipper informed us that one or two more ~~breakers~~ would have sent us to our long "bourne". - I ~~thought~~ ^{as I perceived} ~~it~~ ^{was} ~~surely~~ a most inhospitable coast! After bailing the water from our boat, we rowed towards the shore, and soon stood once more on terra firma, - if the loose and yielding sands of the Brazos can be called terra firma: where we were made more fearfully aware of our recent danger by learning that several persons had been drowned on the previous day, in attempting the feat which we had so unconsciously performed, and which, we discovered was almost unheard of in such a boat as we employed.

There were erected at this time ~~at~~ on Brazos Island a ~~few~~ ^{rough} frames for the public offices and storehouses. Officers at this station had to encamp in tents or else provide quarters for themselves on board the some of the small vessels, many of which lay in the harbour. The distance between the islands here is about 13 or 14 a mile, and there is anchorage as far back for small vessels. But from that point to Pt. Isabel, there is a general depth of only 3 or 4 feet, - all the rest of the lagoon being equally shallow.

Having cleared our little boat of other cargo of water, we proceeded on our voyage to Point Isabel, while a storm was gradually brewing, and the rolling clouds, ^{it being still the rainy season along the coast,} threatened us with another drenching. About sunset we reached our destination, and I made my report to ~~the~~ Commanding Officer Maj. J. L. Gardner 4th Artillery. Our orders were, to proceed with our detachment, after arming it at this depot, to the mouth of the river and thence to Matamoros, where the recruits were to be ~~assigned~~ ^{assigned} to companies. - After having ^{and received my instructions,} made my report, I employed the evening which I passed here in looking up friends from whom I had been long separated. This is one of the highest pleasures of military life: - for severed suddenly, as we often are, from the dearest associations, we never part from our friends as if we were doomed to meet them no more: but with ^{and one drooping eye} ~~one~~ ^{we now have a} anxious hope that we will one day meet with the same suddenness that we parted. One Company of the 4th Artillery, ^{with which were Lieut. W. W. Raines & others,} formed the garrison of the miserable work, Ft. Polk: (but at this time a light Company of the 1st Artillery ^{and with which were serving Lieut. P. A. Brown & J. G. Ward,} commanded by Lieut. W. W. MacCall; and several companies of the 2nd Dragoons, ^{with whom were Lieut. Steele & A. Pleasanton,} were encamped without. Of these officers, Pleasanton and Tom. Ward were classmates; and the latter, particularly, ^{who besides was from my own state,} was endeared to me by every tie of friendship and happy associations in the past. I passed the night with him, in his tent, while the rain fell, as was its wont at this season in torrents during almost the whole time.

Early the next morning we returned to the Brazos, and not ^{being eager} ~~returning~~, after our little adventure of the previous day, to test the force of the breakers again, we awaited the departure of the steamer which was ^{to take us home} ~~taken us home~~. I returned on board of her, and parting with regret from the gallant & kind-hearted old skipper ~~and before~~ ^{before} the whole of our detachment of two hundred recruits was landed on the island ^{before noon} and before night ^{we} we were all encamped about half a mile from the landing near the highest point of the

This part of the island. This was my first encampment in the field. The heat of the midsummer sun glanced fiercely down and the reflection of his rays from the sand rendered the heat ^{almost} intolerable. Around us was the filth of a recent encampment of volunteers, and at one corner of any tent were three or four newly made graves. Thousands of huge sandcrabs, ^{from} four to six inches in lengths almost undermined the island with their holes, and mustered by hundreds ~~on the~~ in our camp and on the beach; till frightened by the approach of some object the unsightly creatures would scamper away in all directions to their holes, running equally well either forwards, backwards or sideways. The island was entirely destitute of ~~fresh~~ water springs; and our only way of procuring water was by scraping ~~the~~ holes in the sand and allowing ^{the rain water which fell as this place} it to accumulate, ~~half~~ ^{by intermixture} ~~put~~ in their ^{water} ~~drains~~ ^{vibrations} as it was with the salt of the ocean. The temperature was suffocatingly hot except during the prevalence of a strong sea-breeze, and then the dry surface sand would be ~~scattered~~ driven into our eyes, into our bedding & clothing, and even into our food! But even in this dreary position I found ~~some~~ relief in looking out upon the broad ocean: ~~and~~ ^{and} walking in the evening "in pensive mood" along the beach, a thousand pleasant memories of the past recurred to me, and many a bright picture did fancy sketch of the days that were to come. And when I wrapped myself in my blanket, soothed by the loud roaring of the breakers which dashed upon the shores, I ~~in a few minutes~~ ^{in a few minutes} slumbered until morning.

I here received intelligence of my promotion from the 2nd Infantry, and by the arrival of a mail a day or two subsequently I received my Commission of 2nd Lieut in the 6th Infy. dating from the 9th of the preceding May. My promotion was occasioned by the death of Maj. Brown of the 7th Infantry, Commander of Fort Brown opposite Matamoros, mortally wounded during its bombardment.

His place was filled by ^{Capt. &} Robt. May. Noel 6th Ligs. whose
 post was filled by 1st Lt. Jas. Monroe: and 2^d Lieut. Geo.
 Mettmore was promoted in lieu of him to ~~the~~ 1st Lieut. of
 while I filled the place of the latter as 2^d Lieut. of
 company "C." This company was then ^{stationed} at N. Orleans
 barracks under the command of its 1st Lieut. (Mettmore)
 the Captain (Thos. L. Alexander) being at the time on sick
 leave. Two other companies of the regiment "D" & "H" were
 en route from forts Gibson & Smith, west of Ark. to
 San Antonio de Texas. Companies "I" & "G" were at Fort. Madril
 and Gibson. The other five companies were broken up and were
 recruiting anew.

At the time I reached the Brazos, the 4th Regiment Illinois
^{and other troops} Volunteers were just arriving, and were departing at the same
 time with us. ~~At the same time~~ a battalion of Missouri
 and about six thousand Louisiana volunteers, who had
 come out under the excitement of the first call for troops
 at the beginning of the war, were returning to their homes.
 They had enlisted for six months; but under an order
 of the President, all who would not agree to serve for
 were directed to be discharged. Out of about
 seven thousand men, only one company of about eight
 men, ^{called appropriately the "Phoenix company"} could be induced to volunteer for the full period.
 The rest, especially the Louisiana troops, ~~were returning~~
 to their homes as miserable a set of wretches as I ever
 beheld. Devoid alike, as a mass, of ^{any principle of} honour, intelligence
 or discipline, they seemed to have embarked in this war
 without any just ideas of what they had to encounter,
 and for the sole purpose of gratifying the most unwholesome
 passions of our nature. Having arrived in the country
 too late to participate in any of the achievements of our
 arms, they had undergone none of the purifying effects
 of service, and were alike ignorant of order, instruction,
 and discipline; but yielding to their worst impulses they acted
 as if ^{indulged in} ~~of your own~~ the most violent excesses. Mexicans,
 Americans, and the government suffered alike from

and their ^{raucous} depredations.

their unrestrained passions. Intemperance and debauchery of every description prevailed to an alarming extent: and unfortunately for the American name; there ~~was~~ ^{are} ~~not~~ ^{not} found in this ^{assembly} mob of Vandals a sufficient number of officers with the moral courage to bear up, with any effect, against this ~~stream~~ ^{disorganizing} spirit. The few gentlemen of pride and integrity and patriotism who found themselves in this worse than barbarian crowd, might well be ashamed of their company. What is here stated is no sketch of the fancy. Horrible as the picture is, there are hundreds who can testify to its truthfulness, & who rejoiced not less than I when this ^{element of disorganization} ~~mob~~ was ~~leaving~~ ^{was} its way from these shores. The necessary evils ^{incident to} ~~attendant upon~~ war, are in themselves sufficiently horrible, without leaving to depict the outrages on human nature which are ever attendant upon the ravages of an undisciplined mob. ^{The presence of such a force, though a numerical increase, is only calculated to dilute the strength of an army.}

While encamped at the Brazos one of our men while bathing in the surf was carried away by the waves and drowned; - and we had also to part with Sicut. Smith who was taken with fever and had to be left sick at Point Isabel.

At length our detachment was armed and every thing was ready for ^{our} departure. On the morning of the 9th August I began my first march. I was on the rear ^{St. Blay conducted the main body} guard, and ~~did not~~ ^{did not} leave camp until all our baggage was turned over to the quartermaster at the Brazos. Our route lay along the beach towards the south; and though the day was ~~very~~ warm, the heat was in some degree tempered by the healthful breeze which blew in from the ~~shore~~ ^{sea}, while the breakers surf that beat upon the shore, often moistened our feet. About six miles from the Brazos we reached the Boca Chica, the smaller mouth of the Rio Grande, which is about a hundred yards wide. As the sea was not running high we forded it without difficulty; the water being little above the middle of the men.

some months ^{on account of the} But, subsequently to our crossing, ~~the~~ many accidents which happened during the prevalence of the high autumnal winds or, "Norther's", a bridge was thrown across here by the Gr. U.S. department. Having marched three miles further through the deep sand, we came to the mouth of the Rio Bravo, which was pouring the full flood of its swollen tide, almost as a torrent, into the ocean. We were a thirsty company: and after having been more than three weeks at sea and ^{almost} the residue of ~~an~~ month subsiding the salt water of the Brazos, we drank with eagerness of the muddy stream that was rolling past us and, thought its waters delicious. But I was soon ^{convinced that} ~~impressed with one remarkable characteristic of the water of this stream.~~ They ^{were almost} ~~seemed~~ incapable of assuaging thirst. No quantity of it ~~seemed~~ would appear to insure one who drank it, but when the canteen was taken from the lips there was still a desire to renew the draught. During my subsequent residence on the river, I observed ~~the~~ almost constant effect on the kidneys, owing in all probability, to the presence of some salt suspended in solution in the water. { the width of the River at its mouth, does not exceed, in my opinion 200 or 300 yards.

Brazos San Jago or Santhago, as I have previously stated, was the general depot of the army. It was so from necessity and not from choice, on account of the greater depth of water on the bar at that place. Even during the ^{high} ~~high~~ flood, there was only a depth of 3 or 4 feet of water on the bar at the mouth of the river, - though just inside, the stream was of great depth very deep. But though the ~~dangerous~~ ^{difficult} nature of the ~~crossing~~ ^{general} ~~the~~ depot at the mouth of the river, a subordinate one was ^{necessarily} established here for the supply of the army above. The supplies, after having been first landed at the Brazos, were subsequently reshipped in smaller steamers and transferred to the

subordinate depot, where they underwent another transshipment and were conveyed by the river steamers to the various points above. The tedious nature of the coast, and the obstacles ~~offered~~ by the bars, often gave great embarrassment to the already sufficiently complicated duties of the L. Master's department, and produced serious inconvenience and ~~long delays~~ ^{delays} ~~in the~~ ^{which} were the origin of many of the complaints uttered against this department. Several steamboats, such as ^{under command of} ~~navigate~~ ^{St. Lawrence}

A guard of about fifteen men, were the only troops permanently stationed at the mouth of the river at this time. Perhaps. Ogden A. C. M. and Lieut. W. H. Churchill Asst. Commissary subsistence were the staff officers at the station. As yet no structures of a permanent char-

the ^{Western} rivers of the U. S. were constantly transporting the troops and supplies up the Rio Grande, and others were constantly arriving. It is somewhat remarkable ^{that} frail as these vessels were, not one was lost between N. Orl. and the Brazos; - though ~~one or two~~ ^{several} were wrecked ^{at different times}, after their arrival on the coast. (See index for above.)

after had been erected. The government stores were kept much exposed; being protected from the weather only by tarpaulins which covered them. Even at this early period I was impressed with the ^{great} amount of waste and destruction of property and stores necessarily attendant upon the movements of troops. Wagons broken down and their contents destroyed or abandoned; quantities of hard-bread ruined by saturation in salt water; were objects constantly met with. But the loss to government in these various ways could scarcely have ~~be~~ ^{been} equalled that sustained by the improvidence and wanton waste of property by the new troops just arriving in the country. It cannot be concealed, that heavy frauds were practised upon the government, even by officers of the new troops high in rank. An instance

Lieut. & Lieut. Col.

in my hearing
 of this was related ~~to me~~ by Capt. Ogden. Gen. Taylor
 had prohibited the introduction of intoxicating liquors
 in the train of the army by any of the settlers or others
 connected with it; and had given instructions to the
 Quarter-masters below to permit none to be forwarded
 from the mouth of the river unless for the private
 stores of officers. Soon after the publication of this
 orders a sutler of one of the Indiana regiments
 was detected in attempting to transport on one of the
 government steamers ~~to the~~ ^{some} the encampment
 of his regiment ~~about~~ 30 miles above, about fifty
 barrels of whiskey. Under the operation of the General's
 order it was about to be confiscated; - when the sutler,
 after some delay, produced a Brigadier general of the Army
 recently appointed from civil life by the President, who
 stated to Capt. Ogden that the whiskey in question was
 of his own private stores! The officer was brigadier
 gen. Same of Indiana! No comment is necessary
 on ^{the character of} an officer whose private store of liquors in the field
 requires a stock of fifty barrels of whiskey!

I bivouacked with my ~~raw~~ recruits on the
 shore that night, with only the sky for my tent
 and the ^{falling} dew of ~~heaven~~ to refresh me. He who
 has ~~taken charge~~ ^{served with new troops} recruits who know nothing of discipline,
 without a man-commissioned officer to render him assis-
 tance; may imagine some of the difficulties of governing
 two hundred raw recruits exposed to temptations of all
 sorts; and ready to barter their last shirt for a single
 "ethiopian" drink. Every deception will be resorted to
 to obtain the indispensable liquid. Send the Cook for
 his rations of vinegar; - if you examine the vessel, its
 contents have been miraculously converted into whiskey;
 order the men to fill their canteens with water for a
 march, when lo! the same wonderful metamorphosis.
 And when the legitimate effects of imbibing have been
 produced, the voracious propensities ~~of~~ due to the "two-fold
 operation of your pheris-sack" soon begin to exhibit

themselves as the subtle liquid "Courmeth" from the inward parts to the parts extreme," in a spirit of mutiny, which but too often can only be suppressed by the interposition, vi et armis, of the officer in command. With the exception of a few outbreaks of this description, when I was aroused from my dreamless slumbers to resort to the use of my sword, I had little trouble with the detachment.

On the 10th we left the mouth of the river on board the steamer "Aid". The Rio Grande, or as the inflated language of Mexico would prefer to call it, the Rio Bravo del Norte, was represented to be higher at this time than ^{it} had ever before been known to the oldest inhabitant. The ^{lower classes of} Mexicans professed to think that the invasion of the Americans, "the barbarians of the North," had brought with it this unmounted height of the waters, together with every other evil that afflicted them. Be this as it may, the condition of the river was most favourable to our movements; as its course ^{for a great distance} ~~was~~ directly along our line of operations.

The river near its mouth ^{appear} ~~did not~~ ^{presenting} dissimilar in the elevation of its banks, ^{to the Mississippi near the Saline,} ~~except that~~ ^{but} there was much less vegetation, and the water spread over the country in more extended ~~artificial~~ temporary lakes. For some miles above the mouth, the banks project only a foot or two above the water, so that to ~~see~~ ^{appear} a boat moving in the distance it appeared almost ^{entirely above the water} ~~wholly invisible~~ and seemed to be ^{it} ~~gliding over the~~ ^{gliding over the} ~~surface~~. Communication by land with the country above was almost impossible, on account of the vast sheets of water which spread ^{back} ~~from~~ the river ~~across the country~~, and ~~which~~ ^{almost} gave to the district ^{near} the mouth of the river ~~the~~ ^{the} appearance of a sea, studded with desolate islands. With much difficulty and labour, however, one or two regiments, ^{and} even ~~with~~ several trains, had succeeded, by marching for many consecutive miles in the water, in reaching their encampments 12 or 20 miles above ~~the mouth~~.

Three of four ^{Commanded by Major Gen. Shields & Lane} ~~camp~~ ^{had} been established within ~~this distance~~ ^{twenty miles} of the mouth of the river. That of the 1st ^{Mississippi} ^{Regt.} under command of Col. Jefferson Davis, was within a mile or two of the mouth: the 3rd & 4th Ill. Volunteers ^{and several Regts} of Ohio, and Indiana and Georgia ^{volunteers} were ^{in rebellion} ~~along the banks below Matamoros.~~

As we ascended the river the country in the distance became gradually more elevated; but even the eminences did not attain an altitude of more than 12 or 15 feet above the surface of the stream. In rapidity the Rio Grande is almost a torrent: and is one of the most furious streams in the world I have ever seen. It would not be a very erroneous calculation to reckon the distance between any two points on ^{this part of} the river as three times as great by water as by land. Thus, it is estimated that the ~~distance~~ length of the road from Matamoros to the coast is about 30 miles; while the river winds a course of between eight and ninety miles between the same points. Within six or eight miles of the coast a perceptible change is recognised in the nature of the soil, ^{induced} by the alluvial deposits from the ^{upper} valley of the river. Vegetation soon becomes luxuriant in the rich bottom land; and the banks ~~are~~ covered with dense patches of small "mesquite" trees, ~~and the mesquite~~ with a thick undergrowth known as "chapparal"; while broad ^{especially on the north side,} prairies ~~extend~~ back occasionally from the river. About 20 miles from the mouth, and on the south bank is the village of Benito, a miserable assemblage of fifteen or twenty cane and mud huts, situated on an eminence some fifteen feet above the water. It had ~~been~~ "fallen without resistance" ~~as~~ ^{the} as the newspapers announce ~~from the papers~~ in flaming capitals, ~~before~~ the ~~on~~ the advance of the troops under St. Col. Wilson of the 1st ^{Inf.} some months before, to make a dem

oustration against Metamoras. ~~Until~~ When ~~darkness~~ ^{darkness} ~~came on~~, the moonless night was illuminated by myriads of fire-flies which flew about ^{upon} the humid banks of the stream.

On the morning of the eleventh we found ourselves, as it were in a new land. We still had the same river with its invariable characteristics; ~~the~~ the same impetuous torrent, sweeping in its winding course against the alluvial banks and tearing them incessantly away, the same character of wooded land and prairie, with perhaps a slight increase in the size of the timber: - but life was infused into the otherwise dreary scene by the presence of a race of men entirely new to me. Until now I had seen no Mexican, except a few wounded prisoners of the Tampico battalion at St. Isabel; and a few labourers in the employ of the Gr. Master at the mouth of the Rio Bravo. ~~I had seen none in their~~

~~ordinary costume.~~ But on this morning we discovered numerous dwellings, ^{constructed} of cane, with a thatched roof of straw dispersed, alone or in groups, along the banks. These structures, so well adapted to the warm climate, were termed ranchos; - whence the term rancheros attributed to the country ^{people} ~~inhabitants~~. Steamboats were still objects not only of interest, but also of curiosity and wonder to these simple inhabitants.

The American invasion had suddenly exposed to their view, while yet, with Mexican confidence, they deemed themselves models for other nations, objects of which their imaginations had never conceived; and the entire household of a ranchito, including men, women, children and hairless dogs, would flock to the river bank to gaze upon every steamer that ascended. The scene was new to me, and I was often ~~impress~~ struck with the picturesque groups which often presented themselves on the shore,

* This dress too was often varied. Sometimes a pair of pantaloons was the only dress; while at other times the loose, short, horizontal The matted and filthy tops of the rancheros was not without grace

picturesque not only from their complexions and
 singular costume, but also from the ~~absence~~^{absence} of
 every ^{species of} costume. ~~At all~~ The dress of the ranchero
 is varied. It ~~usually~~^{usually} consists ^{in winter} of a pair of pantaloons
 of dressed deer-skin, open at the outer seams, ^{almost to the waist} but sus-
 ceptible of being closed by a row of large spherical buttons;
 and of a short jacket of the same material variously
 ornamented with lace or cord; of shoes with iron
 encased spurs; and of a ^{broad} ponchero ^{of medium height} for the head.
 Over the shoulders ~~is~~ thrown, in inclement weather, by
 thrusting the head through an aperture in the middle,
^a blanket of domestic manufacture, often of beautiful
 workmanship. ~~But this dress~~ With the exception of
 the ponchos and poncheros, ~~did~~^{however this dress} not often meet our
 eye at this time: but for it was substituted one
 of equally striking appearance. A pair of very
 loose flowing pantaloons of white cotton, opening at
 the outer seam; and a loose garment not unlike
 a hunting-shirt, buckled about the waist with a
 leathern belt and descending half way to the knees;
 with a pair of sandals of antique ~~form~~ gave to
 the ^{free, erect} ranchero as he stood, in theatrical posture, on
 the bank, an appearance altogether prepossessing:
 and not even the groups of children sporting in
 utter nakedness about their huts; nor the miserable
 little dogs whose black skins were entirely devoid of
 hair, could remove entirely from the imagination
 that feeling ^{so deeply} ~~which was~~ akin to romance. * When
 I beheld this tawny race of men, the offspring
 of the Spaniard and of the Indian; speaking the language
 of the children of the forest with traces of the Castil-
 ian; clinging to the ^{and retaining in great part the colour} customs of their aboriginal ancestors,
 while ^{all} the suavity of the European is observable in their
 manners: ~~I~~ ^{where} I saw around me scenery that
 was so entirely new, costumes that had never before
 met my eye, and felt the presence of a climate

* This dress too was often varied. Sometimes a pair of pantaloons was a ^{the only dress} while at other times
 the loose dress was ^{the loose dress} ~~was~~ ^{was not without grace}

I had never before known, and heard the soft accents of a language of whose rich sounds I had only heard, it seemed to me as if I were ~~surrounded by the poetry~~ ^{surrounded by the poetry} of a fairy-land of oriental life.

But the illusion was dispelled and we take leave of fairy-land when we look more ~~deeply~~ closely into the characters of this people. The soil of the Rio Grande bottom is of unsurpassed fertility, and is remarkably well adapted to the culture of sugar-cane, and will yield at least two crops of corn each season. This ~~fertility~~ ^{fertility} is singularly well calculated to nourish the innate indolence of this race of men, who, after planting, give themselves no ~~further~~ further trouble about their crops than to gather them when matured: and if there should be a superabundance, the surplus is allowed to remain upon the fields.

The process employed in the U.S. in manufacturing sugar from the cane is entirely unknown to them. A very indifferent species of sugar made from the cane and run into cups or corn-cakes, is their only form of the extract used by them. These cakes are called Pilances. ~~A great deal of the cane is used by~~ and are not ^{very} dissimilar in taste and appearance to the tree, or maple sugar of the U.S. - The morals of this class of Mexicans are of a low order: though in ^{beauty of} form, in strength and activity, and ^{as well as in} ~~in~~ ^{moral constitution} stature, the rancheros of the Rio Grande may be said to surpass almost all the rest of ^{the population of} Mexico. - I had an opportunity, on this

(1) We reached Matamoros on the afternoon of the 11th. ~~Travelling~~ up the river, to ascertain from personal observation, something of the calibre of some of the newly appointed generals who were to conduct the volunteers into action. I ~~saw~~ Gen. Jas. Shields at the mouth of the river. He was a pert, plausible, clever Irishman under the middle age, and like all others of his nation brave; but he ~~had not even the advantage of being a "bookish theorist"~~ had been but a few years in America and was totally

unfit for his high position. Maj. Gen. Wm. D. Butler of Kentucky, who ^{supposed} ~~had~~ a high reputation for gallantry and chivalric feeling, reached the Brazos during my detention there. Brigadier Gen. Tom. Marshall, and John A. Quitman were on the boat with me in ascending the Rio Grande. The latter officer, who was from Mississippi, in his manners and address was a gentleman; but he did not appear to me to be a man of much capacity, ^{or of enlarged views} though he had the reputation of being a good jurist. ~~but I cannot conceive that~~ The former officer presented in his luck, one of the strange caprices of fortune. He had been ^{unsuccessfully} a Candidate for election to the position of ^{Lieut. + 1st Lieut.} Captain of a company of Ky. volunteers but was defeated. A few days subsequently he received his commission from the President as Brigadier General in the army. He was ^{not} very tall but ^{of middle age} corpulent ^{man}, heavy in body and in mind, gross in person as in feelings, entirely destitute of refinement, a braggadocio and a bully. All these men were political partisans, without true military pride; but who sought renown at the expense of the true soldier's blood, only for the sake of personal advancement in political life. It might with truth be said of almost all of them that

"They never set a squadron in the field,

Nor the division of a battle knew

More than a spinner;" and unlike the Cassis of Shakespeare, ~~than~~ the "Toled Consuls" of other days, they could not even boast of the "bookish theories."

Matamoros is a new place, but has about it an air of great antiquity. It contains a population of perhaps 6,000. It is situated about a quarter of the mile from the river, and is partially ~~surrounded~~ ^{enclosed} in towards the country by a number of deep ponds which seem to connect with one another. During one of the ^{political disturbances} ~~disturbances~~ which are constantly occurring in Mexico this place

was the centre of an insurrectionary movement under General Arista, whose residence is in the state of Tamaulipas. The remnants of extensive field works which were thrown about the city at that time are still visible.

The plaza of Matamoros like that of most other Mexican cities is ^{near the centre of the town.} It is about 200 yds. square ^{and ~~is~~ ^{bordered} by shade trees.} On the east side of this square is the principal church, still in an incomplete state, though commenced a good many years ago. The principal buildings in the place, which are only two stories ^{high} with flat roofs of tiles and balconied windows ^{and} are grouped about the square plaza and adjacent streets. ~~Beyond these~~ The effect of these by moonlight is very beautiful; and an air of peculiar solemnity, the proper accompaniment of venerable antiquity, is imparted to the unfinished chapel, as the moonbeams stray across its half finished ^{giving them the} ~~turnets~~ ^{appearance of a crumbling} ruins; ~~of a time worn edifice~~ and ^{lighten up} the plain masses of the building, and stream in sickly splendor through the narrow windows of the venerable looking belfry. The better class of buildings including the church, are constructed of adobes, ~~or~~ large, sun dried bricks, and are plastered over and partially glazed to resist the action of the rains. ^{The floors are invariably of partly glazed like the walls or of brick.} With the exception of this portion of the city, the houses are miserable huts, constructed chiefly of cane, and thatched with straw after the manner of the ranchos previously described. * Nine-tenths of the population ~~are~~ of the ranchero class, having all the characteristics of their Indian origin. Their ^{coarseness} ~~dress~~ ^{want of it} ~~coarseness~~, is the same as in the country; for very many of the men, ~~and are some of the~~ ~~coarse~~ walk the streets of the town without any other sign of a garment than a pair of loose flowing pantaloons.

* The side walks are very narrow and streets are not paved.

It is evident from or a chimney is almost unknown in all.

and it is not at all uncommon to see ~~men~~ munchachos and munchachas as old as ten or twelve years promenading in front of their huts, with no other vestments than those ^{assigned them by} ~~assigned them by~~ Native. ~~clotted there~~ ^{The residue of the citizens have a preponderance of Spanish blood, with the bronzed skin of the ~~Spanish~~ European. Several of the merchants are foreigners.}

About $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the plaza, at the upper ferry of the Rio Grande is a ^{regular} hexagonal fieldwork about sixty yards in diameter. It was thrown up by the Mexicans to guard the ferry, during the operations on the Rio Grande, and in honor of the President of the Magnanimous Republic was named Fort Paredes. - On the opposite

~~During my stay at Matamoros the garrison consisted of Low's~~ bank and about a mile below with the American work, Fort Brown.

The ~~garrison~~ ^{different} troops which composed the ^{different} garrisons consisted of Capt. Low's Comp'y. of the 2nd Art'y. in Ft. Brown, Lieut. Haskins's Company of the 9th Art'y. in the plaza, and Capt. Naumann's Comp'y. "H" of the same regiment, ~~forming the garrison~~ in Fort Paredes. The 3rd Regt. Rio Volunteers, Col. Curtis, was the Infantry force ~~stationed~~ encamped on the river bank. Other troops were below and were constantly passing up the river to join the Head Quarters at Camargo.

The recruits of the detachment which I accompanied were all required to fill up ^{according to} ~~the~~ the new ~~standard~~ organization of ^{the army} ~~companies~~, ^{the three} ~~which were~~ stationed at Matamoros. Being freed from duty with this command by this distribution I was desirous of joining the main army, then organizing at Camargo for an advance into the interior. I accordingly made an application to this effect to ~~the~~ Col. N. S. Clarke, the Commandant at Matamoros who had recently been promoted as Colonel to my regiment in place of Gen. Taylor. But here I received another

lesson in disappointments which has fallen to
 the lot of many young soldiers more zealous
 than I. My company was not in the field; but
 after having reached the seat of War I was loth
 to turn my face again towards home before
~~leaving~~ some of the dangers and trying to reap
 some of the fame which attend on the perils of
 the tented field. The army, after achieving the
 brilliant victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la
 Palma, ^{after having} and ~~driven~~ before its advance the wrecks
 of the Mexican force, was preparing to strike
 another blow at the enemy and to follow it
 up by an advance into the heart of the coun-
 try. I was eager to join this gallant ~~army~~
 which was already a veteran force; and I was
 so little conversant with service as to suppose my
 Colonel would see an effort to ~~promote~~ gratify
 a praiseworthy desire in a young officer of his
 regiment to pursue his profession amidst the
 smoke of a bona fide action. But it was not
 until a later day ~~that~~ I learned that other prin-
 ciples more frequently ~~ruled~~ governed the actions
 of military rule. Individual interests must neces-
 sarily ~~must~~ ~~success~~ be lost sight of, in combinations
 which look to harmonious action, and the success
 of the whole. Of what utility then, could I,
 the youngest lieutenant of my regiment, be amongst
 the hundreds of bold hearts already accustomed
 to victory? What practical good could result
 from the presence of ~~an~~ insignificant ~~or~~ personage
 as I with the "Army of Occupation"? It is true
 that the largest masses are ~~formed~~ ^{by the union} of minute
 elements ~~and~~ atoms; ~~that~~ but subtract a blade
 of grass from the wide prairie, or a drop from
 the ocean and its absence is not appreciated.
 My application therefore was not heeded; but I
 was assigned to duty temporarily with Captain

Norman's company, & 7th of the 1st Regt. Artillery, forming the garrison of Fort Paredes. St. Blair, the Commander of the late detachment, returned to the U. S.; and thus was dispersed the ^{little} command which left N. York in the good ship Norman.

Chapter second.

The charms of Fort Paredes & the Rio Grande.

Imagine me in a miserable field work ~~raised~~ thrown up on the bank of the Rio Grande whose waters were spreading ^{far} over the valley and ~~was~~ threatening to inundate our positions. The ~~projected~~ rampart had been partly formed by excavation from the interior of the fort; a legitimate consequence of which was that my tent was ^{soon} ~~surrounded~~ ^{surrounded} by the swelling tide, and I was driven to ~~find~~ ^{seek} refuge on the ramparts before the ^{ground about the} exterior of the fort was covered with water. Those ^{of my friends} who have partaken ^{at this period of my military life} of the hospitality ^{of my board} which was spread out in the entrance to the old magazine, can testify; not only to the sumptuous fare, but also to the swarms of mosquitos which contended ~~that~~ ^{the} meagre dishes, ~~which~~ ^{the} I should ~~rather~~ ^{rather} employ the ^{peculiar grumblers} ~~which~~ ^{which} ornamented the table. ~~They~~ ^{They} doubtless still have glowing recollections of the temperature of this banquet-hall at mid-day under the influence of a tropical sun. The bare remembrance of this time almost excites the perspiration even in latitude 45° N.

I remained in this position from the 15th of August to the 3rd of November 1846. I was the only subaltern with the company, and all the active duties

devolved upon me. The majority of the company were recruits, almost entirely un-
 structed; and it was my province to set
 them up and make soldiers of them. To
 accomplish this I ~~labored~~ I was occu-
 pied daily about 5 hours in drilling them,
 including the drill of light and heavy artillery,
^{pieces} besides that of my own special arm. The
 mornings at Matamoros are oppressively hot.
 Generally there is a perfect calm ~~at~~ at
 sunrise; but shortly afterwards a breeze
 will spring up and ^{moderately} ~~disperse~~ somewhat, the sultry
 heat of the morning. ~~on~~

One of the most common amusements
 at this hour is the ^{process} ~~business~~ of bathing. The luxury
 is indulged in by all ages of persons of both
 sexes and of every age. A favorite bathing
 spot was within a short few yards of the
 fort and within plain view ~~from~~ the ramparts;
~~and men~~ but the señoritas and señoras
 of Matamoros indulged, ~~with unrestrained~~
 by our vicinity, in their accustomed pastime
 and "thought no harm". And it was
~~not altogether unexpected~~ ~~unmistakable~~ to
 watch them ~~disporting~~ ^{groups of} ~~like~~ ~~in the water~~ ~~river~~

So see ~~them~~ ^{of the tenderest} ~~sporting~~ in groups about the
 water and dashing the spray in air. Their
 long, flowing, ^{jet black,} hair thrown back and
 dripping with water, we could almost
 imagine them a convocation of mermaids,
 except that the latter are usually supposed
 by the poets to rejoice in a somewhat
 fairer complexion than those disporting
~~before~~ ^{before} us, in the muddy waters of the Rio
 Grande.

At this hour too are the aguadores or water-carriers, seen thronging with their large earthen jars, to the river bank. These jars are generally borne by the men themselves or by donkeys. But occasionally, so much had the town become americanized, might be seen a rude cart with a few ~~water~~-casks for distributing the water about ~~the~~ city. By noon, almost every animate creature seemed paralyzed by the heat, and kept within doors, - if their ~~purpose may be allowed to apply that term~~ for the interior of these thatched hovels.

But the temperature of the evening was most delightful. The air was soft and balmy; and the sky as blue as that of Italy. Nature awoke from her "after-dinner's sleep", and seemed full of voluptuous life. But unfortunately there awoke with her in our particular locality ^{myriads} ~~a multitude~~ of mosquitos, "a multitude," like which the populus abhor. Poured never from her ~~loins~~ ^{loins} ~~such a universal~~ ^{thick} ~~horde that it~~ ^{swarmed} ~~struck the~~ ^{like} ~~ballantosa~~ ^{thick}."

From our peculiar position ~~just beyond the suburbs~~ ^{too} of the town, we were favoured with the melody of the hairless curs and the prairie wolves, collected in two hostile lines along the neutral suburbs of the town. The ~~concert~~ ^{concert} was usually begun by a single wolf when the gang had approached sufficiently near, and the notes were immediately taken up by the whole pack in one prolonged and melancholy cry, rendered more hideous by the barking and yelping of every cur in ~~the place~~ ^{the place} as they joined in the chorus. This was our evening's entertainment at Fort Paredes: Sundays not excepted.

Many a scene, entirely new and picturesque

Came under my observation as I looked around from the ramparts of the old fort for something to amuse or instruct me. I often had occasion too, to remark that passion for gaming which seems to characterize the whole nation. So inveterate is this propensity that I have often observed ^{Mexican} laborers in the employ of the Quartermaster, seated by their carts at the steamboat landing, playing at monte while awaiting, for a few minutes, their turn for a load of stores. The gaming houses are thronged at night with the lower classes; and it is not uncommon to see women even, seated around the monte table, their features almost hideous with the excitement of the game.

Their custom of burial seems strange to an American. They take the philosophical view of the question in the case of infants; and instead of following their bodies in the semblance of woe to the grave; they are borne away ~~on a bier~~ ^{of the living} decorated with flowers, while music, and the noise of bursting fire-crackers seem to betoken an occasion of joy. They seem by this demonstration not to lament the departure of ~~their infant~~; but to consider ~~their~~ death as a happy release from the toils and troubles of this world.

The Mexicans of the Rio Grande may be said to be an amphibious animal. They ~~on day~~ ^{off} are constantly sporting about in the water, and the river seems their element. I saw a remarkable instance of their expertness on one occasion. Several hundred mules were to be crossed at the fort in order that they might be driven to Camargo on the Texas side of the

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crime, and of unprovoked cruelty visible too often in the followers of our camp, might very reasonably have inferred that we were in reality, what the Mexicans ^{actually} denominated us, the "Barbarians of the North." Matamoros at this time was little more than one large drinking ^{& gambling} establishment!

Even in this part of Mexico I observed the use, ~~by~~ the females, of the delicate cigarita; but though I saw, more extensively used afterwards, and by a higher class of the population, the habit ^{always} appeared ~~always~~ repulsive to me. I could never reconcile it with my sense of propriety, that the delicate pipe of a lovely girl should ever be converted into a chimney for exhaling clouds of tobacco smoke. And in this opinion, I doubt not, I am upheld by my own fair countrywomen.

During my stay at ~~Matamoros~~ Ft. Paredas Col. Bartiss's regiment of Ohio Volunteers was encamped at no great distance from us; and I soon learned, what my subsequent experience ^{on} more than one occasion taught me, that ^{to be in} the vicinity of a volunteer encampment is almost equal to being in one incessant skirmish. Where so many men, most of them men of men, are embodied without being subjected to very many restraints, it is hardly to be wondered at that they should be firing at every object that offers a good mark. The consequence is that an atmosphere of balls is apt to be met with in their vicinity; and numerous accidents must be the result.

I was initiated too into the frequency of false alarms, very appropriately called "stampedes."

which must be more or less frequent amongst all troops. We were, in fact, in a position which offered to an adventurous foe, an excellent opportunity of crippling us. Besides, we were entirely destitute of any mounted troops which might serve to enlighten us as to any movements projected against our position. Our annoyances were consequently sometimes very great when called from a sound sleep to line the parapets, in expectancy of an attacking foe, who perhaps was at least two hundred miles distant.

~~Before~~ ^{about the middle} of September, I heard early one morning the sound of martial music, from the deck of a steamer which was ascending the river. It was the band of my ~~former~~ ^{former} regiment, the 9th Infantry, and in a short time afterwards I had met some of my old friends from whom I had been for some time separated. Captain Kingsbury, Col. Riley, Capt. Alburtis, ~~Capt. Morris~~ and some others of the regiment, were along. In company with them, I met ^{for the first time since our graduation,} C. W. J. Curwell, a classmate and an intimate friend. He had just been promoted from the 6th to the 5th Infantry, and brought me the intelligence that my company had moved from N. Orleans Barracks to Fort Saraca and San Antonio, with the object of joining Gen. Wool's column.

"On this hint I spoke" once more ^{for services,} and endeavoured to obtain permission to join any company; but my application was without avail; and I was sentenced to make a still longer stay at Fort Paredes.

It was matter of interest to study the character of the strange people amongst whom I found myself. Until the beginning of this campaign, each nation had been equally ignorant

of the strength and progress of the other; and each had been accustomed for several years previously to hold the power of the other in contempt. Those who are ^{at all} acquainted with Brother Jonathan, must have learned in a ^{very} short time, the exalted opinion which he entertains of himself; and ~~false~~ modesty by ^{no} means restrains him from openly expressing that opinion. To his credit be it said, however, that he does acknowledge that merit, and intelligence may sometimes be found in others; but he is thoroughly convinced that he is himself the "smartest" Nation in the Universe.

The Mexican is of a different Temperament. The blood of Castile has given his character a different dye; and though but a small proportion of the population can boast of that ancestry, the pride which attends it seems to have been disseminated throughout the whole nation. Even amidst the valleys of Old Spain, we know something of the effects of that haughty bearing in restraining intelligence and narrowing the compass of the mind. When uncultivated ignorance, such as we meet with every step we take in Mexico, becomes imbued with the sentiment of its own superiority, where is the term of which it will set to its own ^{fancied} greatness, and ~~where~~ ~~the depths into which it will~~ how remote the line of distinction between itself and the inferiority of others! When ~~that~~ idea of superiority was once instilled in the public mind of Mexico, it was nurtured into conviction by the whole history of the country. Did they not force the sceptre of power from the reluctant hand of the ~~old Spain~~ ^{old Spain} ~~country~~! - that bright land

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of Mountain and valley which they had been ^{accustomed to} look upon as the fairest portion of Creation; and whose power had once been considered invincible! Having once won their freedom in this protracted contest with the mother country, their subsequent wars were intestine broils and petty revolutions, in which the ink of proclamations flowed more freely than blood; but as in the whirl of giddy fortune every man had at some time been on the winning side, the entire nation were confirmed in the first ideas of their own superiority. The legitimate consequence of this inflated opinion was the utter contempt ⁱⁿ which they held the American government and its people, and the confidence with which they entered into the war with the "Barbarians of the North." This feeling showed itself on all occasions of our intercourse; and was manifested in every proclamation which, even after defeat, looked to nothing short of driving the invading foe back into the waters of the Sabine.

But the equanimity of Brother Jonathan was little disturbed at this slight opinion of others. He was satisfied in his own mind of his own "prudence" and of his "destiny"; and had a good-humoured compassion for those who could not think with him. He therefore moved on, in the even tenor of his way, in that bright path which "Manifest destiny" seemed to have marked out for him.

Revolution had followed revolution, in such rapid succession in Mexico, that they had become at this time so common as to excite ~~but~~ little interest in the minds of any but ~~other than~~ the chief actors in the drama. He, whose only acquaintance with change in government

Since our first great Revolution, was the success of one or other of the great parties at the polls, viewed at first with astonishment, this universal apathy of the Mexican nation, in matters which would have stirred up the feelings of every boy in our confederacy.

Revolution, in our vocabulary, was a word of portentous import; involving the change of rulers and of system, and shaking the very foundations of deep-seated governments. Under the impetus of our own progress, we were accustomed to attribute ~~these~~ ^{monstrous} changes which marked the close of the 18th Century and the advent of the present; and to our example was the new world indebted for that galaxy of young Republics which simultaneously sprung into existence. It seemed inexplicable, to us at first, when we observed amongst the masses of the Mexican population less interest manifested in the complete overthrow of their constitutional government, than would have been shown in our own country on the occasion of a County election. "Poor, patry slaves!" while imagining the enjoyment of the highest privileges of freedom, they had virtually ceased to be any portion of the ^{nation} ~~government~~ and ~~had~~ ^{were considered to have} no other interest ~~in~~ the government than except in so far as they might minister to the cupidity and avarice of those in power. They had ceased to regard a change as of any consequence; and their chief inquiries of news from the capital, were usually directed to ascertain who ~~were~~ at the head of public affairs.

But though they had lost every interest in their own government, and the fires of enthusiasm had died away; and the

Last sparks of patriotism had ceased to glow, there lingered still in the dying embers of their hearts, a passion which in a measure replaced the higher incentives to action. A deadly hatred of all that was not of their own blood seemed innate to their ~~hearts~~. Though they had no government to defend, it sufficed them that a hated foe whose blood was different from their own, was imprinting their soil with their footsteps. This feeling of hatred rallied them to a standard, ^{under} which otherwise they would not have marched; and planted in every hand a dagger ready to be sheathed in the heart of any American who might offer an opportunity to the assassins. And while this spirit was too plainly shown, there was also exhibited its invariable accompaniment, a psychopathic servility, which, while it meditates harm, can glose its meaning with homied words, - Can

"Look like the innocent flower, but be
The serpent under it."

So great was the hatred and fear which we inspired, that I doubt not the Bloody Northern Barbarians have been the theme of many a nursery tale; - as many and as fearful perhaps as those occasioned by the deeds of the "Black Douglas." I was first convinced of this by an incident which happened to Capt. Taunton and myself. We were one morning ^{strolling} ~~walking~~ along the banks of the river some distance above the fort, and suddenly came upon a hut in the midst of ^{the} wood and tall cane. A child about three years old, very primitively clad, was ^{playing} a short distance from the ranch, and at first did not observe our approach: but when we attracted his attention, he was so appalled by the savage appearance of the two "barbarians," that

with one prolonged yell of despair he darted towards the door of the ranch. The inmates who seemed all to be females, sprang out to the rescue, and snatching up the child, made good their retreat within fastened doors. It was in vain that we attempted to protest, ^{by our manner,} that murder was not in our thoughts. The child had evidently been taught to regard us as little better than savages, and deemed himself lucky in having escaped from our clutches. I confess I was ~~a little mortified~~ ^{not much flattered by} this little incident, which showed the fear and detestation in which we were held; and I was not a little mortified to think that there was too much reason ^{in many instances} to support the justice of the opinion which was entertained of us.

But woman, that far better-half of creation, showed herself, even in Mexico, capable by her goodness, of redeeming many of the darker traits of Mexican character. How many were the acts of kindness which our sick experienced at their hands! How often did she attend, like a ministering angel, by the couch of even her wounded foe, to assuage the grief of his wound! How often did the native goodness of her heart prompt her to assist in rescuing the unfortunate from danger, even though he might be the enemy of her country! The recollections of incidents of this character has deeply impressed itself on my mind; and ~~not~~ ^{search} none of that numerous host which poured its tide from the frozen North upon the sunny plains of Mexico, can reproach one of the fairer portions of its population with an act of cruelty or unkindness. Woman here, as everywhere, redeemed the character of man, and scattered ^{burning and blackening} flowers ^{of devastation} ~~of destruction~~, even amidst the ~~devastation~~ ^{war}.

During my stay in Matamoros I ~~learned a~~
~~good deal about~~ was enabled to form my opinion
 with respect to the character of a few of
 the Mexican Generals who had participated in the
 recently fought actions. If Mexican accounts be
 true, Gen. Ampudia, who exercised the command
 at Matamoros until within a few days previous
 to the battles on the Rio Grande, was a man
 of some talent, but very deficient in personal courage.
 Many attributed the loss of the actions to his jealousy
 of Arista, and to his cowardice, which together
 prevented a hearty co-operation between them. We
 should be careful however, about receiving these
 stories, which might readily be coined by the
 vanquished to account for a defeat. He was
 generally unpopular ~~however~~, amongst the body
 of the people. Arista was, on the contrary, very
 much beloved, - particularly in the northern
 provinces amongst which he resided. He
 was the proprietor of a hacienda in the state of
 Tamaulipas; and was also a large property
 holder in Monterey, in the state of Nuevo Leon.
 He was almost idolized by the people of Matamoros;
 and as a natural consequence, his military
 reputation amongst them was of the highest
 order. He probably deserved it in a very consider-
 able degree; and was doubtless one of the ablest
 of the generals whom we had to oppose.
 I had not been long in Mexico before I had
 learned the name of Canales. If newspaper
 reports and the fears of camp followers might be
 considered just exponents of military fame,
 then was Canales the most distinguished
 officer for partisan warfare that the annals of
 nations can produce. To-day a party was attacked
 near Camargo - Canales was on the road: - tomorrow

~~a~~ ~~then~~ a few amateur soldiers are chased into ~~La~~ Matamoras; - the next day the garrison of Monterrey is ^{strongly} reinforced: - Canales is the hero of all these stories. He seems ubiquitous. ~~But upon examining~~ Now he is hovering with a large force to attack Matamoras; a few days subsequent he is at the pass of Tula; and a short time afterwards is about to throw himself into Tampico. I at first formed a very exalted notion of this redoubted chieftain, so many and varied were the accounts of his excursions: but when I came to consider that nothing was ever accomplished by him, ~~unless~~ perhaps the murder of a few men; and that it would require the speed of an eagle to place him in the different positions which fear assigned him, I ~~came~~ arrived at the conclusion that he was ^{certainly} one of those "bugs to fear boys"; which operate upon our ~~apprehensions~~ ^{apprehensions} solely through ^{the medium of} fancy. I believe, indeed, he was little more than a robber chief, who acquired this inflated reputation solely on account of our ignorance of Mexican names and of their movements. * See page 65, 13th line p. bottom.

To a young soldier who is really desirous seeing active service, and who is chained down to a life in depot, at a time too, when his appropriate position is in the field; it is a source of unspeakable annoyance to be situated at a point where every movement in advance must come under his observation. It was thus with me at Matamoras. I arrived there at a most active period of the campaign. After the signal victories of Palo Alto & Resaca de la Palma, an interval of repose followed for the army while preparations were making for an advance movement. That movement was fairly begun at the time of my arrival. The regular troops were then arriving at

Camargo; and Gen. Taylor, with his personal staff, had left Cuatamoros only a few days before my arrival there. The volunteer troops were just beginning to pour into the country, and to organize, in Camps on the lower Rio Grande, into brigades and divisions. Ammunition and the various munitions of war were arriving, and ~~the~~ ^{Depots of} supplies for the Commissariat and for the Quartermaster's Department were beginning to be formed. Several Steamers, and their number was constantly increasing, were ~~constantly~~ ^{exclusively} employed in freighting these supplies to the secondary depot forming at Camargo. From time to time troops were ordered from the various encampments below, to take post with the army above, preparatory to a forward movement. All was activity save within the walls of St. Paredes, where we were constrained to be idle witnesses of these busy preparations. Amongst the troops which passed up the river were ~~two regiments of Ky. Volunteers of the Louisiana Legion~~ ^{formed by Col. Ormsby}, and McKee's ^{2nd} Regiment of Ky. Volunteers. In the latter I met several acquaintances; - amongst them Capt. W. T. Willis and several ^{of his} sons, - and Lewis Webb formerly of Mansfieldville. I formed the acquaintance, on the Rio Grande, of Lieut. Col. Henry Clay Jr. and of Major Carey Fry, the other field officers of McKee's Regiment, - and with both gentlemen I was much pleased.

At Cuatamoros and point Isabel I was first thrown in with a portion of our Cavalry the 2nd Dragoons. Amongst the officers whose acquaintance I formed was Capt. Charley May, who had obtained such celebrity throughout the country by his charge at Resaca. He did not make a profound impression on me, and I soon learned that his army

reputation, however commensurate with his merits, was far below that which he enjoyed amongst civilians. He is certainly a man of but little intellect; and though he is generally well-liked as a companion, he is little esteemed as a brilliant soldier. If spirit could be added to his other qualities he would make a good officer.

As one of the ~~pleasant~~ ~~means~~ means of making my detention at Cuatimoras more pleasant than it would otherwise have been, I must not forget my acquaintance with Father McElroy, a chaplain of the Jesuit order of the Catholics, and ~~he was~~ one of the best of men. He was one of the two Catholic Chaplains appointed by the President at the beginning of the war, to accompany the invading army. Induced solely by the hope of accomplishing some good, he consented to accompany the army and was assigned to Cuatimoras as his station. Here his labours were unceasing. He sought to do good, not by vain declamation and the assumption of a sanctimonious air, but by the dignity of true goodness, and the simple, chaste and beautiful language prompted by a virtuous heart. My attention was first attracted towards him by my most intimate friend, Tom. ^{as he was passing through Cuatimoras, and} ~~Curry~~ ^{Curry}, who was himself about to embrace the Catholic faith. It gives me pleasure even now, when I imagine I can see them together, an aged and a youthful man, with like purity of heart, and alike regardless of self, ~~and~~ ^{devoting} themselves in the hope of benefiting others.

As the preparations for ~~re~~ ^{forward} movement ~~from Cuatimoras~~ advanced, my stay in Fort Paredes became more irksome. Almost daily did reports reach us of the probable