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"LIBERTY AND MY NATIVE SOIL."

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From the New Orleans Delta.

Battle of Buena Vista.

Description of General Taylor's position—Cannonading on the 21st—Gen. Taylor's exposed situation—His white horse—Battle of the 22nd of February—Death of Col. McKee, Col. Clay, Col. Hardin, Adjt. Gen. Lincoln, Col. Yell, Capt. Willis—Colonel Marshall's charge—The gallant Mississippians—Gen. Taylor's left flank turned—Demand to surrender—Killed and wounded—Minnon's discomfiture.

We had the pleasure of an interview yesterday with Major Coffee, of the Army, who brought over Gen. Taylor's despatches. This gallant officer—a son of the distinguished General who fought so bravely on the Plains of Chalmette, and in various other battles, by the side of the illustrious Jackson—acted as the Aid of Gen. Taylor in the bloody fight at Buena Vista. We are greatly indebted to him for many particulars of this hard fought battle.

General Taylor had fallen in love, at first sight with the position at which he finally made his stand—at Buena Vista. His movements towards Agua Nueva were merely a ruse to decoy the enemy into the field which he had selected for his battle ground. As soon as McCulloch's men, who were invaluable as scouts, informed him of Santa Anna's approach to Agua Nueva, General Taylor quietly broke up his camp, and fell back to his first love—Buena Vista. This position was admirably chosen. It was at the foot of a mountain, or rather of two mountains, between which ran the road through a narrow valley. On his right there was a deep ravine, which protected that flank more effectually than half a dozen regiments could have done. The left of General Taylor's line rested on the base of a mountain. The road in the centre was entrenched and defended by a strong battery. In front the ground was uneven—broken into hills and deep ravines—well adapted to the mode of fighting suited to our volunteers, and by its peculiarities supplying the disadvantage of a great inferiority of numbers.

On the 21st the enemy were described, approaching over the distant hills. At their appearance the volunteers raised a great shout, and gave three tremendous cheers. Their engineers and officers were seen flying over the field, and dragging their cannon about to get them in position; but the nature of the ground did not favor the undertaking, and it was late in the day before the big guns began to open.

The enemy had with them thirty-two cannon, mostly of large calibre. Their fire, though kept up very briskly, and apparently well manned, did so little execution in our ranks that it was not considered necessary to return their fire. Our cannon were therefore silent the whole of the 21st.—Eight or ten killed and wounded were the extent of the casualties sustained by our army on the 21st. During the day an officer approached our lines with a flag of truce, and requested to be shown to Gen. Taylor. The brave old man was sitting quietly on his old white charger, with his leg over the pommel of the saddle, watching the movements of the enemy, when the Mexican officer was presented. In a very courteous and graceful manner the officer stated that he had been sent by his Excellency Gen. Santa Anna, to his Excellency Gen. Taylor, to inquire in the most respectful manner, what he (Gen. Taylor) was waiting for. From the silence of Gen. Taylor's batteries, and the quiet manner in which he received Santa Anna's terrific cannonading, the Mexican supposed he was asking a very pertinent question, to which however, old Rough and Ready gave the very pertinent reply that "he was only waiting for Gen. Santa Anna to surrender." The Mexican returned hastily to his lines. This message proved to be a ruse to ascertain where Gen. Taylor's position was, for after the return of the Mexican officer to his own ranks the whole Mexican battery seemed to open upon General Taylor's position, and the balls were sent over and about him like hail. Utterly indifferent to the perils of his situation, there

sat the old chief, on his conspicuous white horse, peering through his spy glass at the long lines of Mexican troops that could be seen at a great distance on the march.—The persuasion of his aids could not induce him to abandon his favorable point for observation, nor to give up his old white horse. To the suggestion of his staff that old whitey was rather too conspicuous a charger for the commander, he replied "that the old fellow had missed the fun at Monterey, on account of a sore foot, and he was determined he should have his share this time."

At sunrise on the 22d February, the battle began in earnest. The Mexicans were drawn out in immense numbers. The dark columns of infantry extended as far as the eye could reach, and the cavalry seemed to cover the whole view with their interminable lines. At intervals between the infantry and cavalry, their big guns, strongly protected by a large artillery force, kept up an incessant cannonade against our lines. Their forces were soon in motion. Our artillery was thrown forward to meet them, protected by the volunteers.—Gen. Wool led the main body in person, and was seen everywhere, rallying and encouraging the volunteers. The two armies were soon engaged in hot conflict.—The broken nature of the ground divided the forces, so that instead of one general engagement, the regiments were compelled in a great measure to fight on their own hook. Our officers were always in the advance, leading their troops—hence the great mortality among them. In this general mele, one of our small regiments, of 400 men, would be attacked by a whole Mexican brigade of several thousand. Thus the Kentucky infantry was attacked at the foot of a hill, in a deep ravine, by an immense force of the enemy. A large number of the officers were killed here—among them was Col. McKee, who fell badly wounded, and was immediately despatched by the enemy, who pierced him with their bayonets as he lay on the ground. Lieut. Col. Clay was shot through the thigh, and being unable to walk, was taken up and carried some distance by some of his men, but owing to the steepness of the hill, the men finding it very difficult to carry him, and the enemy in great numbers pressing upon them, the gallant Lieut. Colonel begged them to leave him and take care of themselves. Forced to leave him on the field, the last that was seen of this noble young officer he was lying on his back, fighting with his sword the enemy who were stabbing him with their bayonets. The veteran Capt. Wm. S. Willis, of the same regiment, at the head of his company, with three stalwart sons who fought at his side, was badly wounded, but still continued the fight, until he was overcome with the loss of blood.

In the meantime, the Indiana brigade, who were drawn out and ordered to charge the enemy, were seized with a panic, and displayed some hesitation, Assistant Adjt. Gen. Lincoln rushed to their front and whilst upbraiding them for their cowardice, was shot, several balls passing through his body. In justice to this brigade it should be stated, that they subsequently rallied, and fully redeemed their reputation by the most gallant and effective fighting.

Col. Hardin led the Illinoisians in very handsome style, and the sturdy "suckers" fought like lions. Their intrepid Colonel fell wounded, and experienced the fate of Cols. McKee and Clay, and was killed by the enemy—not however before he had killed one of the cowardly miscreants with a pistol, which he fired whilst lying on the ground.

Col. Yell led, the foremost man, a charge of his mounted volunteers against a large body of lancers, and was killed by a lance, which entered his mouth and tore off one side of his face.

The Mississippians, the heroes of Monterey, after doing hard duty as skirmishers, were ordered into line to receive a charge of cavalry, which they did with their rifles, delivering at the same time a most destructive fire among the crowded columns of cavalry. The enemy were completely repulsed. The distinguished commander of this gallant regiment, Col. Jefferson Davis, was badly wounded, an escopette ball having entered his foot and passed out of his leg. He was, however, doing well when last heard from. The chivalrous Lieut. Col. McClung was prevented from doing his share of the brave deeds of this brilliant fight, by the grievous wound received at the battle of Monterey, which still confines him to his bed, and from which it is much feared by his best friends he will never recover.

Col. Aumphy Marshall's splendid regiment of Kentucky Cavalry were impatient for an opportunity of showing their mettle, and avenging the capture of their brethren, then in the hands of the enemy. They were soon favored with the desired opportunity, by the approach of a force of more than 2,000 Lancers and Hussars, who gallantly charged them. The Kentuckians stood their ground with immovable steadiness, and receiving the enemy with a fire

from their carbines, charged in the most gallant style through the column on the right and wheeling, fell on their left, dispersing and killing a great number of them. A like charge was made by Col. May, at the head of a squadron of Dragoon, and one of Arkansas Cavalry, against a large body of the enemy's Cavalry, with like results.

During the engagement on the right, Santa Anna, seeing that Gen. Taylor's force was not well protected on the left flank, sent a large force of cavalry around that point, and out-flanking Taylor, succeeded in throwing 2,000 men into his rear. But Gen. Taylor immediately sent Capt. Bragg, with his artillery against this force, who succeeded in cutting them off from the main body. Lieut. Crittenden was despatched, with a flag of truce, to demand the immediate surrender of this force. The Mexican officer, pretending not to understand the character of his mission, insisted that he should be blind-folded, according to the rules of war, and thus had the Lieutenant carried into the camp of Santa Anna himself. This was a ruse to get time to extricate the Mexican Cavalry from their dangerous position, and pending this truce they were all drawn off by a different road from that by which they had gained this position.

Lieut. Crittenden was conducted blind-folded to the tent of the Mexican General-in-Chief, which he found a long distance from the scene of action, and which he thought the safest place he had been in during the whole day. As he approached Santa Anna's tent he was greeted with a most tremendous flourish of trumpets, which might have been heard a mile off, but produced no very great terror in the mind of the Kentuckian. His blind was taken off, and he found himself in the presence of the famous Mexican Chief, surrounded by a brilliant staff of bedizzened, gilded, and mounted officers. Santa Anna apologized to the Lieutenant for the act of his officers, in having him blind-folded, saying, that so far from having any desire to conceal his situation, he was rather desirous of exhibiting to General Taylor the utter folly of resisting so powerful an army as he had under his command. To which the Lieutenant replied, that his simple message was to demand his [Santa Anna's] immediate surrender to General Taylor. When this extraordinary demand was translated to the Mexican, he raised his hands and eyebrow in utter astonishment at the temerity and presumption of such a message, and replied, that he would expect Gen. Taylor to surrender in an hour, or he would destroy all his forces. Lieut. Crittenden's reply, which we have already given—"General Taylor never surrenders!"—terminated the interview, and the battle re-commenced, and was continued until night.

Santa Anna took three small pieces of our artillery, which, under Lieut. O'Brien, had been posted too far in advance to be covered by our infantry. All the gunners were shot down, and when the guns were captured there was not a soldier left to man them. One of these pieces was an old Texian 6-pounder, which, during the Texan Revolution, had done good execution among the Mexican ranks. As to the flags he boasts of having taken, they are very probably mere company markers, which were dropped on the field and picked up by the valiant Mexicans. His Excellency of the War Department, to whom Santa Anna has sent these trophies, will no doubt be sorely disappointed in the size, texture, and beauty of these standards. Mexican pride is easily satisfied when such feeble mementoes of their prowess and valor as these console them for so inglorious a defeat.

All the officers on our side, in this hard-fought battle, distinguished themselves. The details of the battle were confided to Gen. Wool, who nobly justified the confidence of his commander and brother-veteran, by the most active, zealous, efficient and gallant conduct. Throughout the whole action he was constantly engaged in the disposition of our forces, and in rallying them to the onset. It was a miracle that he escaped the thick flying balls which thinned the ranks he was marshalling. There was but one complaint made against him, and that was, he exposed himself too much. Brigadier General Lane, also, showed himself to be a brave and capable officer. Although wounded early in the action, he kept his horse until it closed, and never for a moment left his post.

The old General-in-Chief remained at his original and much exposed position, superintending the battle and narrowly watching its events. An escopette ball passed through his overcoat—that same old brown, so familiar to all the officers and men who have ever been under his command, and has seen several campaigns in Florida, in Texas, and in Mexico.

On the night of the 22d, both armies drew off from the field of battle. Our men were engaged all night in bringing in the wounded and taking care of them—the Mexicans as well as their own men. There were, however, but few of our men found on the field wounded. They were, to use

Santa Anna's significant words, in his despatch, "all dead," the cowardly miscreants having killed every man whom they overtook, wounded and helpless on the field. With like turpitude and treachery, they left their own dead unburied and their wounded uncared for, on the field where they fell. The latter were carried to Saltillo, in our own wagons, the former were buried by the alcalde, under the orders of General Taylor.

A number of officers were taken prisoners, and an exchange was effected, by which all our men who are now in their hands were released. Cassius M. Clay's party are understood now to be in the city of Mexico.

Among the killed and wounded of the Mexicans are three general officers and twenty colonels and commanders of battalions. General Minon, it appears, has not as yet realized the brilliant career of which he considered his capture of Major Borland an earnest. He was ordered by Santa Anna to attack and carry Saltillo during the engagement at Buena Vista. With this object, he made a demonstration against the town with 2000 cavalry. Lieut. Shover, with sixty men and two small pieces of artillery, went to meet the valiant General, and at one discharge of his cannon, sent him and his large force to the right about in double quick time.

In concluding our necessarily imperfect sketch of the few details of the brilliant deeds of American valor performed at Buena Vista—details gathered from a hasty conversation, we must be allowed to express our satisfaction to find that the anticipation we have so confidently and so frequently expressed of the bravery and efficiency of our volunteers, have been more than realized. Let those who have heretofore made citizen soldiers their theme of their ribaldry and ridicule, be forever hushed into silence by the unparalleled gallantry and glory which have consecrated in American history the bloody field of Buena Vista.

Later from Vera Cruz.

NEW ORLEANS, April 14.

U. S. steamship Edith, Capt. Couillard, from Vera Cruz, evening of the 6th inst. arrived at the Balize on the morning of the 11th—reports that Alvarado was taken by the army, without a battle, on the 4th inst. On the 5th inst. Col. Harney, in command of the 2d Dragoons and a detachment from General Twiggs' division, took possession of Antigua capturing one officer and eight Mexican lancers.

The army was to move on the 7th inst. in the direction of Jalapa by divisions, General Twiggs leading the advance, followed by General Patterson with volunteers, and General Worth, with the first division of regulars, bringing up the rear. The health of the army so far was good.

The U. S. steamships Virginia, McKin, and Endora, left at anchor near the castle San Juan de Ulua, the Endora soon to leave for the United States.

The two ports reported to have been taken by our forces are Flacotalpan and Cosamoloapan, above Alvarado. They have fallen without resistance. They are important points, situated upon the fine inland waters which have their outlet to the Gulf at Alvarado. Mr. Kendall informs us in a postscript to one of his letters, that Com. Perry is about starting with all his vessels, with the intention of capturing every city, town and port on the entire Mexican coast.

The very latest report at Vera Cruz was that Santa Anna would dispute the passage of our troops to Mexico with an army of 20,000 men, but it was an indefinite rumor to which Mr. Kendall attached little importance.

Editorial Correspondence of the Picayune.

VERA CRUZ, April 5, 1847.

Alvarado, as every one anticipated, was taken without firing a gun, and the squadron has returned to this place. Captain Mayo has been left as Governor of the town with a small force, while Capt. Tainall, in the Spitfire, has gone farther up the river to look in at the different towns. I learn that General Quitman's brigade returns to-morrow, and I further hear that Lieut. Hunter, of the Scourge—the first in at Alvarado—has been arrested by Com. Perry for going ahead of his instructions, or on some charge of the kind. Better be accused of going too fast than too slow, and I hope that in the present instance, Lieut. H. can explain every thing satisfactory. A great number of cannon and other military stores were captured at Alvarado, for there were no less than seven forts and batteries on the water side. It is said that Commodore Perry has brought off every thing of value, and trust the report may be true. To my thinking all the more valuable spoils taken from the Mexicans should be carried to Washington City, or some other place in the United States where every body can see them. There they can always remain as trophies of the American arms, and one of the most pleasant hours I have ever spent was in reading the inscriptions

on the old Spanish guns we have captured from Mexicans, and which the latter have treasured as among the most brilliant results of their wars with the mother country. They are covered with figures and devices of most finished and elaborate workmanship, although none of them are more than two hundred years old.

We are constantly in receipts of rumors from the city of Mexico—every man who arrives has some new tale to relate. The general impression is that Santa Anna has succeeded in putting down Gomez Farias, after a great deal of fighting but little bloodshed. What his next movement is to be one cannot tell, yet there are many who think that he is disposed to carry on the war with the United States to the last. That Santa Anna and the leading minds of the country, especially among the higher classes of the clergy, know full well the utter folly of the contest, is certain; but that they can make headway against the swarms of hungry officers and mal contents, who only live by war and convulsions, is problematical.

It is now thought that the army will move forward in the course of a week at farthest, although without a sufficiency of transportation to take along many of what may almost be deemed the indispensables of a march. The great gales of the winter, the immense number of wrecks, and the losses of mules and horses attendant, have crippled the resources of the Quarter Master's Department to a most annoying extent. Yours, &c. G. W. K.

VERA CRUZ, Mexico, April 6 1847.

I have just seen a man from the city of Mexico ten days since, coming by the way of Orizaba. He gives a most ludicrous description of the fighting at the capital. The Polka or the Priest party have been in possession of the Alameida and other portions of the outskirts of the city, while the adherents of the Government have been quartered at the Palace. At 10 o'clock each morning the firing would commence, either party going up to their sand-bag barricades and banging and blazing away, promiscuously, and miscellaneously at any thing, and nothing; more especially nothing. The result of one month's hard fighting has been that one poor German watch-maker and a few innocent women and children have been killed or crippled—the beligerents have deemed it either imprudent or expedient to come in sight of each other. A more perfect farce has never been enacted.

My informant says that there are some twenty American deserters at the city of Mexico. They rendezvous at the ten-pin alley of a man named Hawkins, and are in a most pitiful condition. There are also near one hundred American prisoners in and about the city—perhaps Major Borland's party.

A body of 1,000 men horse and foot, left Puebla a week ago to-day; in the direction of Jalapa. They all talked right valiantly of driving the perfidious Yankees from their soil, but will think better of it when they meet with a few samples.

My informant met with many of the disarmed garrison of this place between here and Orizaba, they were telling wonderful stories of the size of our horses, and the terrible effect of our shells. Little confidence will they inspire, wherever they go.

It is thought the Mexicans intended making one of their bold stands this side of Jalapa. A few days will tell the story.

In haste. G. W. K.

VERA CRUZ, April 6, 1847.

Cols. Kinney and Banks, with Captain Merrill's company of 2d dragoons, returned last evening from a scout in the neighborhood of Mango de Clabo. The country is full of cattle, but they are described as extremely wild; and difficult either to catch or drive. Some plan will be contrived to bring them over.

I have another report in relation to Santa Anna. I heard it stated confidently this morning that he had advanced as far as Puebla this way; that he was positively coming on to Jalapa; and that he could raise as many volunteers as he pleased. What he intended to do at Jalapa—whether to fight or to attempt to negotiate a peace—is not stated. I give this as the last rumor up to this moment—8 o'clock, A. M. Before I close this letter another may reach. I saw Senor Arraigoiz, the former Mexican consul at New Orleans, a night or two since. He had just arrived from Havana, and had received a permit to proceed towards Mexico. He frankly told me he did not think his countrymen in the least inclined to make peace with the United States.

You may possibly receive rumors—for they are plenty here—to the effect that Capt. Thornton's company of the 2d Dragoons has been attacked and cut to pieces by the Mexican rancheros, and other stories of similar import in relation to the different parts of the country, passing through the country.