

my Mexican acquaintances. I have made some progress in acquiring their language. Yesterday I dined with them by invitation. The natives are moving from the city in great numbers, and every day increases the belief that the town will be attacked. About nine o'clock the other night, the whole city was thrown into an uproar by an expected attack. Great were the stir and confusion. As the long roll resounded from every guard station, the crowds of terrified citizens were seen hurrying to their homes, closing up their stores and barricading their doors. The fire was gleaming from the rough stones, as the galloping steeds were rushing to and fro. The cries, 'to your quarters, men, the enemy is upon us!' added to the commotion and tumultuous disorder.

"In a few minutes our little force was formed on the main plaza, and after an exciting appeal, were stationed at different points. There we anxiously awaited the assault, but waited in vain, and were soon disbanded, as the alarm was occasioned by the firing of the Mexican sentry upon convicts who were attempting to make their escape. It appears that Santa Anna had sent an order to the alcalde, requiring him to liberate the criminals, on condition they would join the army. This the alcalde refused to do; the prisoners finding this out, raised in rebellion, which caused our stampede.

"Yours, &c."

Camp at Agua Nueva, February 12th.

We arrived at this place, on last Saturday, to join General Taylor and Wool, who recently concentrated their forces here. It is generally believed that a movement is contemplated upon San Luis Potosi, or Zacatecas.

It is quite cold in this elevated situation, and we have suffered exceedingly, especially within a few days. Last night was the first snow storm that I saw this winter. We use pitch-pine as wood, and chop it ourselves upon the mountains, six or seven miles from the camp, by the road.

We now occupy the post of danger, and know not what is in store for us. So many reports have been in circulation, that we are almost indifferent to what we hear, no matter how startling it might appear. But if we march towards San Luis, we shall have what we have been so long craving—a fight. Recently I became sergeant, to fill the vacancy occasioned by Thomas Gwin being made

sergeant-major. Being on guard to-night, these notes are written during the intervals of my duties; having a cold, and nursing my light, which is kept flickering by the howling wind without. It is nearly eleven, and time to awaken the second relief.

13th.—Last night I was so cold and uncomfortably situated, that I was incapable of holding my pen, but I have commenced early this morning, hoping to finish before my companions start away. There was rain last night, and it don't seem so cold at present, but the mountains are still covered with snow. This place is truly romantic, and presents some of the finest prospects I ever beheld. There is the extended plain, dotted with white tents, and the huge mountain piles around excite the loftiest sentiments. If the gorgeousness of the sunsets could be transferred to canvas, the painter might be called a wild enthusiast.

Dear sister, in sending you this journal, I am actuated by the expectation of a long and perilous march. It is well to dispense with all superfluous weight. Please take care of this till I return, if I should be so fortunate. I know not whether to ask you to continue writing, as it is doubtful whether your letters would be received. I shall hasten to apprise you of our next movement. Remember me to all my friends, my mother and brothers in particular. My fingers are so benumbed that I cannot write any more.

28th.—During last week, I have passed through so many thrilling scenes, that I am unable to describe them in regular order. Last Sunday we received orders to strike our tents and prepare to march. Before we had formed a line, and the command given, "file left," the most of us were ignorant of our place of destination. But so soon as we commenced marching towards Saltillo, there was an end of discussion.

Traveling about sixteen miles, we arrived at Buena Vista. After pitching our tents, we lay down supperless, for we had neither wood nor provisions. Scarcely had I fallen asleep, when the news was circulated that a mail had arrived. Soon after a letter was handed me from my friend Mrs. W., but, having no light, I was forced to postpone the reading till morning.

We had scarcely finished our breakfast, when the long roll was beaten, calling us all to arms, as our picket guard had just arrived

with the intelligence that the Mexican army was approaching. Having packed our wagon and formed a line, we were marched one and a-half miles towards the enemy, and stationed on a ridge just behind the narrow pass in which Major Washington's battery was placed. There we waited the approach. The Mexicans had encamped the night before at Agua Nueva, causing the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, who were guarding some provisions, to destroy them and retreat in the night.

We were greatly indebted to Colonel May and Captain M'Culough, who rendered us much good service as spies. The intelligence which they brought caused us to leave the plains of Agua Nueva for a very strong and advantageous position.—Whilst we were awaiting the onset, I read Mrs. W.'s letter over and over again. It was encouraging, and afforded many topics for contemplation.

Having remained in this position more than half the day, we were ordered over to another height on the left, near the foot of the mountain, where we were, during the night, occasionally receiving a shot from the enemy's battery. (See Map, Letter D.) Toward evening, the two rifle companies, from each of the Indiana regiments, commanded by Major Gorman, who were stationed on the left, upon the side of the mountain, (see Map G,) were fired upon by an immense body of the enemy, who had also ascended the mountain. A heavy fire was kept up till dark, when all was silent, save the echoing of the enemy's trumpets. I never shall forget the peculiar melody of those sounds as we lay upon our arms, hungry, and shivering with cold. It was a prelude to the awful din of next day.

Before hostilities commenced, a flag of truce was sent by Santa Anna with dispatches to General Taylor, stating that he was here with twenty thousand men, and to save loss of blood, demanded immediate capitulation. General Taylor is said to have replied, "If you want us, come and take us!" It looked almost like madness, with an army of four thousand five hundred men, and sixteen small pieces of cannon, to compete with a force, which all our prisoners, and Santa Anna himself, agree in being twenty thousand men, and seventeen pieces of cannon—of which eight were sixteen and twenty-four pounders. What a fearful difference! Yet that small army of raw, inexperienced volunteers not only struggled against twenty thousand strong of the flower of the Mexican army, commanded by one of the ablest generals in the world, but obtained a com-

plete victory. This I hold to be one of the greatest achievements upon record.

Before I proceed further, I must confess my inability to give an accurate description of the whole action. The excitement and interest I experienced in what was passing immediately around me, occupied all my attention. I shall, therefore, for my future perusal, detail my own feelings and actions, together with what came under my own observation during the hazardous conflict.

At sunrise, on the following day, the roaring of the enemy's cannon announced the commencement of hostilities. A heavy fire was opened upon our riflemen upon the mountain, but they returned it in a handsome style. They were reinforced by a part of the 2d Illinois regiment and Kentucky cavalry, but still the odds were greatly against them. The whole mountain side, as far as the eye could reach, glittered with the enemy's bayonets and lances.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when our regiment and a battery of three pieces, commanded by Lieut. O'Brien, marched out towards the battery which had been playing against us during the night and morning. We formed a line in front of three regiments of Mexico's oldest soldiers (see Map O). It was an awful moment to face the thousands of veterans in solid column, with their gaudy uniforms and showy banners. But we had no time for admiration; for, before our line was formed, they had fired two rounds, which we soon returned in right good earnest. I was at my post in the rank of file closers, and was urging the men to form in their proper places, when Captain Sanderson cried out, "Never mind, Frank, fire away!" which I did, with all possible haste. About this time the battery on our left (see Map, Letters M, B), opened upon us a deadly fire of grape, which raked our flank with terrible effect; still we stood front to front, and poured our fire upon the infantry, which did us but little injury, as they shot too high. But the battery on our left galled us exceedingly. It appeared as if we had purposely halted in their exact range, and the whole atmosphere resounded with the whizzing shot that came with increasing precision. Apollos Stephens was the first of the Greys to fall. He received a grape shot in the head, and fell back almost into my arms. O, how shall I describe the horror of my feelings? There lay quivering in death one of my comrades, with his eyes upturned, and the tears starting from them. It was a sad and touching scene—one that will never be effaced from my

memory. I was loading when he fell, and compressing my lips, and smothering my emotions, I stepped over him and fired. Our captain was the next to fall, exclaiming "*I've got it, boys!*" A grape shot had struck his scabbard, which saved his life. Being ready to fire again, I stepped into a vacant place in the ranks, where I continued to load and fire without noticing anything around. The only thought I remember to have had was, "What a wonder I did not receive Captain Sanderson's shot, as I was next to him on the same line! so the ball must have passed me before it struck him." All was hurry and excitement, each working hard and doing his best. Occasionally a cannon-ball would whistle over our heads, or strike the ground near us, throwing the rock and dirt in all directions.

We had fired about twenty-one rounds, when I heard some one say, "They are all retreating!" and turning, I saw that the right wing had gone, and the left starting. But several who had not heard Colonel Bowles' order to retreat, cried out, "Halt, men! for God's sake, stop!" At this, many of us hesitated; but the retreat was general, and the enemy fast advancing upon us, led on by a large force of lancers. At length, Lieutenant Cayre, then in command, remarked, "It's no use, boys, to stay here alone; let us retreat!" which we did, with the balls raining around us, and the lancers at our heels. We rallied, by order, on the brow of the ridge from which we started in the morning, but were told to fall back upon the ridge on which we were first formed on the morning of the 22d. Here many of us met the Mississippi regiment of riflemen, who had just arrived from their quarters in town.

The more I reflect upon our position in the opening of the conflict, the more I am at a loss to understand the policy of sending the 2d regiment against such an overpowering force. We were three-quarters of a mile from any assistance, except that of the gallant O'Brien, who with his three little pieces did such great execution.

Our field officers all deny giving the word retreat, and General Lane, they say, intended to charge. Had he given the word, the charge would have been made; but how dreadful would have been the slaughter of our troops. It is unprecedented in the annals of warfare, for eight companies to rush against a disciplined force of three thousand infantry supported by twelve hundred lancers. Had we remained fifteen minutes longer, it is thought not one half of us

would have survived. Their battery was fast getting our exact range, and it is astonishing that so many of us escaped.*

My object in thus pausing in my description, is to show the position of our field officers, and why the 2d Indiana regiment scattered themselves into other regiments. Here, one instance will be related showing the qualification of Colonel Bowles to command. On the night of the 22d we were surprised by a body of horsemen, supposed to be lancers endeavoring to outflank us. This was pointed out to the Colonel, who called us to attention, and attempted to form us in a line of battle before the enemy. But, in his ignorance of tactics, he got us with the "left in front," and while we were maneuvering to get right, we might have been cut to pieces. Fortunately, however, the alarm was caused by some of our own cavalry, who were returning from watering their horses.

At this display of incapacity in the hour of danger, great murmuring arose amongst the officers, and the men were all unwilling to trust their honor and lives in his hands. A committee was sent to General Lane, requesting him to be with us on the following day, which he promised faithfully to do. Now in these remarks, I do not wish to express any disrespect to Colonel Bowles, farther than as a military commander. I believe him to be intelligent, courteous and humane, and judging of actions during the engagement, I have no reason to doubt his or Colonel Haddon's bravery. But who would wonder at our want of confidence in these officers, after be-

* In justice to General Lane who, being ordered by General Wool to move forward and meet the enemy that were advancing in strong force, selected this point for their reception—I will state, that since I have surveyed, with more leisure and coolness, our position, I am convinced that a more judicious spot could not have been chosen. It was the only place where our small force could present so large a front as the enemy, who, with their overpowering numbers upon almost any other ground, might have surrounded and destroyed us. To show the probability of success, had the intended charge been made, I will here quote from a conversation after the battle. General Wool remarked to Colonel Bowles, in the presence of General Lane, Colonel Curtis, 3d Ohio regiment, and Major Washington, Light Artillery, that if he had withheld his order, "Cease firing, and retreat," and had carried out the intention of General Lane, to advance, his regiment would have executed one of the most brilliant things ever done on any field of battle; "for," said he, "Santa Anna, in his own official report, remarks, 'that he had already passed an order for his forces to retreat, when the enemy, after a most determined resistance, was observed to give way in great confusion.'"

holding their ridiculous blunders while on drill? Who would blame the men for preferring other commanders, when the enemy commenced crowding upon us? One-third of us joined other regiments, and the remainder rallied under Lieutenant Colonel Haddon, forming a distinct front as a regiment, and fought with firmness alongside the Mississippians and 3d Indianians.

After many fruitless exertions to rally his men, Colonel Bowles ordered those who were near him to join the Mississippians, at the same time falling in himself. We marched along the ridge to meet a large body of lancers supported by infantry. We soon opened our fire upon them, and that, too, in a manner which forced them to retreat, and pursuing, we halted at intervals, and continued our leaden hail. Having followed them across two deep ravines, they were reinforced, and came rushing down upon us like a tremendous avalanche, pouring out upon us their incessant shot. We fell back across the two hollows, occasionally halting to fire upon our pursuers.

While in the second ravine, the sun shining with burning heat, famishing for want of water, and almost overcome with exertions, I leaned against a rocky precipice, and there made up my mind to die. Sad and hopeless were my thoughts, when, raising my head, I beheld the Mexican line firing down upon us. At this I was involuntarily aroused, and recollecting an expression in Mrs. W.'s letter, "If you should die, it would kill your mother," I made an effort for those I loved and gained the summit. But oh! God! what a merciful preservation! The balls rained around, scattering death and destruction on every side. It appeared like the bed under a shot tower, so thick and fast did the balls hail about us. A man just before me was shot down, and a brave lieutenant, who so kindly made room for me in his company, fell wounded behind me, exclaiming, "Give me water! give me a handkerchief!" I gazed upon his supplicating countenance, but had nothing to relieve him. Rendered reckless by the sight we had just witnessed, we rallied again upon the top of the hill, and with the 2d Indiana under Lieutenant Haddon, opened a terrible fire upon our blood-thirsty enemies. They soon retreated in the utmost disorder.

Having fled beyond our fire, a detail was sent to explore the ravine for our wounded. While descending, what a shocking scene presented itself! The barbarians were cruelly butchering our wounded, and stripping them of their clothes. But our unerring rifles soon stopped these atrocious murders. Our success was but

poor compensation for the blood of twenty brave comrades. The poor lieutenant was left naked with his throat cut from ear to ear.

About this time the city of Saltillo was attacked by two thousand lancers, from Palamus Pass, commanded by General Minon, but being unable to face Major Webster's well-directed battery from the redoubt fort, were driven back, after endeavoring to join the main army by passing along the foot of the mountain. Simultaneous with this engagement, a charge was made by a large body of lancers upon our baggage and provision train, at the Ranch (see Map, Letter J) Buena Vista, and were met by several companies of Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, who were unable to withstand the shock, and were forced to fall back. Then the extended line of lancers came rushing down with their weapons poised ready to murder and rob our wounded, and sack our wagons. But they were checked by the appalling fire from the Indiana rifle battalion, who were ordered from the mountain with others who had rallied there. (See Map, Letter K.) If the latter could be blamed for retreating thither, they more than balanced it by their coolness and heroic defence in this instance. So firmly and furiously did they resist the Mexicans, that the plundering wretches gladly made their escape, leaving the plain strewed with their dead and dying. They were now pursued by Colonel May's squadron of dragoons, who, with two pieces of Captain Bragg's battery, had just come up. They were driven along the foot of the mountain into a gorge, where they joined a **force** that the Mississippians, reinforced by the two Indiana **regiments** and a twelve-pound howitzer, had been firing upon with great execution. There we had them in a dreadful dilemma, Colonel May (see Letter U), and the two pieces on the left pouring forth a destructive fire as they closed in. Below, on their right, was stationed a battery of three pieces, commanded by Captain Sherman, (see Letter Z,) emitting without mercy the messengers of death. Still further to the right was our position, (see Letter H,) and with our little cannon was opening their ranks at every fire. At this interesting crisis, just as we were about to obtain a brilliant victory over a force of more than five thousand strong, we were ordered to cease hostilities, as a flag of truce had arrived. There was an immediate cessation on *our* part, which the enemy faithlessly took advantage of, by passing out of the gorge, but not without suffering greatly from the fire which opened upon them, when their object was discovered.

The greatest portion of the afternoon was spent with these events. The enemy, now making another desperate effort, came charging down upon us in all their splendor. We at once formed a V. (See Letter H.) The 3d Indiana on the right, the Mississippians and 2d Indiana forming the angle. As we stood awaiting their approach, Colonel Davis cried out, "Hold your fire, men, until they get close, and then give it to them!" I never shall forget the imposing appearance of the Mexicans as they bore down upon us with their immense columns, glittering lances, and parti-colored banners. There was one company mounted upon white horses, and wearing brass mounted caps, with red plumes. At first they started off in a trot, and as they accelerated into a graceful gallop, with lines accurately dressed, and lances poised for action, within twenty paces of us, General Lane gave the word—"Now give it to them!" Here I shall fail in description. What language could I use to convey a vivid impression of the din and crashing thunder of this terrible collision? How awful was the report and the destruction of our deadly fire. The enemy at first slackened, then halted and wavered; then turning toward their battery, on the ridge, they fled, terrified and panic-stricken.

It was, indeed, a glorious achievement. Whole platoons appeared to droop and fall before our unerring shot. It seemed as if every man felt that he was an American soldier, and that he was individually responsible for the performance of that hour. And as the victors pursued the retreating foe, they rent the air with their shouts of triumph, throwing up their caps, and giving every demonstration of the highest delight.

I now felt for the first time like exclaiming, "There is something glorious in the pomp and circumstance of war." I almost thought that I could not be killed, and I felt secure when I reflected about the bloody ravine, and my miraculous escape. General Lane here rode by, exclaiming, "*We'll whip them yet!*" He forgot entirely his wounded arm, and rode about the field cheering and encouraging the men. It was truly a happy time! Our little cannon had played into them so effectually, and it was defended so nobly! In a few minutes we were again facing the foe upon the ridge, near the place where we were stationed in the morning, (see Letter S.) The enemy had planted there a heavy battery, (see Letters M and B,) and as we ascended the brow of the hill, we were warmly received by an incessant fire, both from the battery and the Mexi-

can reserve of six thousand that were pursuing the Illinoisians and Kentuckians, who had *heroically* attacked this overpowering force. This was the unfortunate charge in which fell the gallant Hardin, McKee, and Clay;—a trio of mind, heart and courage, ever to be lamented. (See Letter P.)

We soon, however, nothing daunted, paid them back with interest, and again the air was eloquent with our victorious cheers. We there fell back for protection, under the brow of the hill, and calmly listened to the whizzing shot from the enemy's battery striking the ground in front and rear, scattering the stone in every direction. Thus was spent the remaining portion of the day. Occasionally we would be called to attention, and marched to the brow of the hill, when we suspected some demonstration upon our cannon, which was used in silencing the enemy's battery. About sundown, the thundering of artillery ceased, and the conflict of the day was over.

The Mississippians having received orders to repair to their quarters in town, myself and Lieutenant Kunkle, (who so proudly bore our banner in the thickest fight,) accompanied them as far as the hacienda. Our noble banner was executed by the skill and patriotism of the New Albany ladies.

Such a night as I spent at the hacienda, God grant that I may never spend again! What piles of wounded and dying that lay groaning around! After wandering about among the wagons which were formed into a hollow square, I came across one of my messmates. Warmly grasping each other's hands, we mutually inquired for our comrades. Then came the mournful tidings of the death of Francis Baily, Warren Robinson, and Charles Goff, three of my warmest friends, and brightest ornaments of our company. What a shock was this!—two of our beloved messmates, by whom, side by side, we had laid together for so many long months on the soldier's couch, and with whom we had so often joked, while around our simple meals! But no more shall we mingle together in such uninterrupted harmony! I sought among the wagons for my blanket, but it was not there. I desired no food, notwithstanding I had eaten but a few pieces of hard crackers since the morning before. I was now becoming conscious of my excessive weariness. Loss of sleep, violent exertion, and the rain, which drenched us several times during the day, caused my bones to ache in every joint. Weary and faint, I resorted to the roof of one of the houses, hoping

to get a little rest, but in this I was disappointed. I had scarcely begun to occupy a portion of a blanket kindly offered me by one of my friends, when we were alarmed by an unexpected charge from the lancers. Great were the excitement and hurry on the house tops. Soon every one was ready and waiting for the onset. Thus the night was spent in continual alarms, anxiety and suspense. We were ordered to lie upon our arms, and five times during the night were we aroused for the expected assault from the lancers, whose watch fires gleamed ominously from the mountains around. The sun had hardly arisen upon the bloody field, when I gladly arose to seek a fire, as my limbs were benumbed with cold. While seated on a stone near a fire, I was brooding over my fate, and that of our little army.

Gloomy, indeed, were my thoughts when my eye caught an open letter lying upon the ground. Picking it up, I read carelessly until I started at beholding my own name. Soon I found that the letter was written from my beloved home, by one of my female friends to my departed associate, Charles Goff. Never did I before so fully appreciate the value of friends, or a quiet home, away from the tumult of war. "A—— says she loves her friends." How did these sweet words sink into my heart, and what would I not have given to have realized their import! But what a contrast between my situation and that of my friends! The dead and the dying, with mangled and bloody features, staring at me, and a day of deadly strife before us! I felt that my own destiny would soon be sealed, and resolved to hold out to the last.

If ever permitted to return home and mingle with valued friends, and enjoy the blessings of peace, doubtless many of the horrors will be effaced from my memory. But never shall I forget the terrible night that I passed at the hacienda of Buena Vista.

Having partaken of some refreshment, many of us proceeded to the field to rejoin our regiment. While wiping out our muskets and renewing our flints by the way, we were passed by six men, bearing the body of a wounded companion. Looking over their shoulders, I recognized my old friend, Sergeant Combs, of the 3d Indiana regiment. The poor fellow had been shot in the leg, and had lain out in the field all night. In the morning his naked body was found amidst a plat of prickly pears, with his flesh penetrated by the long needles. He has since died.

Upon our arrival we heard of the retreat of the Mexican army,

and parties were sent out in all directions for the killed and wounded. Another and myself obtained leave to seek for the body of Warren Robinson. The last account we had of him he was in a ravine, completely exhausted, and some one passing, remarked, "Warren, don't stop here; you'll surely be killed!" He answered, "I can't help it; I can go no further; and if I never see you again, you will know where to find me." This place was described to us, and we found him accordingly. He was pierced to the heart by a ball, and robbed of his shoes and stockings, and the contents of his pockets.

After gazing upon the placid countenance of young Warren, and reflecting on his blasted hopes of the future, we raised him up, and with assistance, bore his bleeding body to the summit of the ridge. Having secured a wagon, a party of us went in search of others belonging to our regiment. At length we found the horribly disfigured bodies of Apollos Stephens and Francis Baily. They were stripped of their clothing, and near the place where they had fallen in the morning. At first the icy coldness of their naked bodies sent a thrill of horror at every touch throughout my whole frame: but my firmness of nerve increased a little as we progressed in filling up the wagon with our fallen associates. How my blood chills when I reflect on those dead soldiers stiffened in frightful attitudes, that were heaped upon one another so promiscuously! On which side soever we turned our eyes, could be seen friends and foes terribly mangled, and lingering in torture. Many of the Mexicans would call out "Agua, agua!" and gulping it down, they would appear resigned to die. And thus the day was spent in wandering over the bloody field, and burying the dead. The dead of each regiment were laid together. Our boys were placed side by side—Robinson sharing the blanket of his college mate Capt. Kinder. After preserving a lock of each one's hair, as a memento for their friends, we fixed a cross made with staves, with their names cut thereon, and raised over them a pile of stones. Then we fired three salutes, and with a heavy heart returned to our camp. But wherever we went, the dead appeared to follow us, and the most solemn silence reigned around. On one side lay fifty of our killed, all stripped; and everywhere could be seen the effect of the raging conflict. After a cheerless supper, we performed the last duties of humanity to our worthy messmate Charles Goff. It appears that during the retreat he received a lance wound in the left elbow, and repaired to a stream below the rancho to quench

his thirst and bathe his wound when he was attacked by five lancers. Seeing him unarmed, they pursued him at full speed. After chasing him some distance, they overtook him, and Charles, finding it impossible to save himself, faced the foe and received the lance in the breast, before assistance could arrive, and died with an expression of calm resignation lingering upon his countenance. He was a good soldier, taking pride in the performance of all his duties. As a Christian he was invulnerable to the temptations of camp. The last conversation I had with him was just before we marched out to the battle. I inquired if he had expressed to any one his wishes in case he should fall. He replied "No!" with great seriousness. "Hadn't you better?" said I. "Yes, and now is the time," he answered. "I wish you to collect my papers and things, and take them home to my friends; you know who I mean." I asked if he just meant those things that might be preserved as mementos. Here we were called to attention, and he replied by nodding his head. Then I heard his rallying voice after the retreat, which was the last I saw of him until he was cold in death. O how deeply do we feel his loss! Few, indeed, were like him! We buried him by moonlight on a grassy ridge near the spot where he fell. Several officers of the brigade and regiment were present.

The next day our scouts brought word that Santa Anna was still at Agua Nueva, and perhaps would renew the combat. We were ordered to strike our tents and repair again to the battle-field, where we remained suffering almost every inconvenience. In my mess there was not a single blanket, and many of us had lost our knapsacks with our clothing. So we were forced to sleep upon a stony mattress with our tents as coverlids. Even such rest as these could afford was uncertain. Our dreams were feverish with anxiety, and every hour we expected the long roll, and our arms were continually near us. The long roll! oh how terrible the sound! fraught with danger and death! The soldier alone can appreciate its import! A night or two before, we heard its sounds with all its horrors.

Others with myself were conversing over a few coals when General Lane came up, and ordered Colonel Bowles to have the long roll beaten as an express had just arrived, stating that our picket guard had been fired upon. This was a fine opportunity to witness its startling effect, and waking up my mess we looked down the ravine, where so many were reposing their weary bones. The moon looked down upon us in all her silvery brightness, save in the

gloomy shadow of mighty rocks, which were piled up stratum upon stratum. Death-like stillness pervaded the scene, but it was like the silence that precludes the mighty crash of the avalanche; for now the rolling of a hundred drums spreads from line to line. In an instant the white coverings are flying in the air, and the whole army starting to their feet with every variety of expression visible upon their excited countenances.

After shivering in the cold for an hour, we were permitted to lie down again upon our arms. Thus the time was spent in continual alarms and rumors of assault, which was worse than a dozen battles. We were all anxious to meet the enemy again, to be revenged for their cruelty to our wounded brethren, and felt that we could fight more effectually, as we were hardened into indifference by the past, in beholding our falling comrades. And further, we had a reinforcement of General Marshall with three eighteen pounders. At length intelligence came that the Mexican army had taken up their line of march to San Luis Potosi; when we were ordered immediately to make preparations for our old encampment.

It was a melancholy march, as the road all the way for sixteen miles was strewn with the Mexican dead. On a single spot I counted thirteen bodies; and at times the scent from the field was almost insupportable. After an exciting march, we pitched our tents near the spot which we left a week before; and part of the time since the enemy had occupied, whose fires were not extinct on our return.

March 14th.—We received orders last Wednesday to remove back to Buena Vista, as the water was so bad, and the wind and dust so disagreeable, that even our horses were affected, causing them to die off in great numbers. I was on guard the day before, and was not relieved till the next evening. To remain a whole day in the hot sun without shelter, and remain up all night in the cold wind, is a poor preparation for a hard march. The guard went in advance, and upon our arrival, were posted around the camp, which is situated on a ridge, sloping from the mountain. There we remained until the tents were pitched, and a new guard mounted.

We have not yet forgotten the battle. Low spirits, gloom and regret are everywhere manifest. There are but few who have not to mourn the loss of friends and relations. Our wounded are all