

April 27th 1846. I have often thought of keeping a journal, but have never until now ever commenced one. In the lives of most people there are very few incidents worth recording and to fill a sheet with soliloquies, meditations and moralizings has never struck me as being a very profitable employment of our time. What then has made me change my mind? In the first place let me premise that this is only the first sheet of a journal, quite probably it may be the last. Should the present excitement which creates in me a "cave the scribendi" pass over soon, I shall drop the respectable character of a journalist. It is, however, probable that events are about to happen which I shall be glad to remember in old age, if by the goodness of God I am spared. For the sake of economy too (i.e. of time and paper, the latter of which is scarce) a sheet now & then from my journal may answer very well for a letter, when as often happens, we are without previous notice warned that a mail will start in an hour.

The murder of Col. Croft, & M. Genl of our Army, caused considerable excitement in our Camp. News on the heels of this event, news was received of the attack and defeat of a scouting party of 10 men

commanded by Lieut. Porter 4th Regt., and of his death.
 This party started from our camp just as a
 tremendous thunder storm came up. During the
 whole night they remained exposed to a heavy
 rain. Next morning while marching on a narrow
 road through the Chaparralle, they came suddenly
 on a number of Mexicans, apparently banditti, with
 which the country is said to be infested. These
 fled at the approach of our men, leaving their
 horses behind. Lieut. P. mounted his men and continued
 to advance. He was now warned by a sergeant
 that in case of difficulty the guns were so wet
 that they could not be discharged - disregarding
 this he went on. Suddenly a party of about 100
 Mexicans forming the main body of which he had
 seen only an advanced guard, opened fire on him
 from the bushes. Our men attempted to return
 the fire but the pieces being wet all snapped.
 Lieut. P. & one man are supposed to have been killed,
 the rest of the party seeing their commander fall
 fled into the chaparralle & have all come in safe.
 The conviction was universal that so large a
 body of men could only have been collected
 together by regular Mexican authorities, but their
 actions being disallowed by Gen. Ampudia, we were
 not entitled to hold them responsible.

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We had now remained unmolested in our position
opposite Matamoros during three weeks. Our position
was in many respects faulty, but although
within the range of Mexican batteries, we erected
our own fortification without interference. The
army present on the Rio Grande could not number
over 25 or 2800 men. The troops on the opposite bank
amounted to from 4 to 6000. This apparent apathy
on their part, led our Chief & perhaps 9/10^{ths} of his
officers to think with contempt of Mexican prowess, &
to entertain a fallacious feeling of security. From
this we have been suddenly awakened. I have now
to tell a story more disgraceful to American arms
than anything which has occurred since the beginning
of the war of 1812. Three days ago intelligence
was brought in by our spies that the Mexican
troops were crossing in force 30 miles up the river.
A Squadron of Dragoons under the command of Capt. Thomas
was immediately detailed for a reconnaissance with
the following orders. "Ascertain the fact of the crossing,
how many have crossed, & where they have gone. Show
not 2 or 3 men in advance, these may be sacrificed, but
your command will be safe." These instructions
are sufficiently clear, but the officer detailed for
this duty was incapable of properly performing it.
Without prudence, madly Quixotic, and above all
holding his adversaries in supreme contempt.

he should never have been entrusted with
 so important a duty. Having arrived at a
 certain point on the river a large trail
 was crossed. The Mexican guide who accompanied
 our party, here refused to proceed further, being
 convinced of the neighbourhood of a large force.
 The party went on without him, going single
 file through the thick chaparral without ad-
 vanced guard, & without flankers. Capt. Hardie,
 a prudent & brave officer commanded the rear
 company. Proceeding in this way they came
 at length to a ~~very~~ large open field, surrounded
 on three sides by a very strong chaparral hedge,
 and enclosed on the 4th by the river. Narrow bars
 led into this enclosure, at the opposite extremity
 of which were two houses. Prudence would have
 suggested that the whole command be halted
 outside the field, excepting a non-commissioned
 officer with 2 or 3 men, who would go to the
 houses for information. A ~~strange~~ infatuation led
 Capt. Thornton to go on ^{with his whole force} not even leaving a guard
 at the bars. The houses were found deserted. The
 Dragoons dispersed in every direction, ~~a~~ without any
 regard to the commonest military precautions,
 seeking some one to give intelligence. ~~This~~

In this state they were found by Capt. Hardie who entered the field last. He communicated with Capt. Thornton without effect. Suddenly the alarm was given, & firing commenced from behind the hedges on every side. Capt. Thornton led his troops back to the bars as rapidly as possible - they were closed by a bristling array of bayonets & by Mexican Dragoons & Cavalry. Calling his men to follow, he galloped around the hedges under the Mexican fire. Capt. Hardie perceiving the folly of this proceeding, rode up to him and advised that he should attempt to cut through the hedges, while some of the men were ^{cutting with their sabres} at work, others might cover them with their fire. Capt. T's horse had however become unmanageable & ran with him wherever he pleased. Capt. T. now took command; called the men to follow him, & made for the river, determined to swim it, & take the chances on the opposite shore. Unfortunately an ^{impassable} marsh prevented him from reaching it. He rallied his men, examined their arms under fire, & found that most of them had after discharging their shot their carbines & pistols. Seven men were killed, ^{one of whom has since died} & 4 wounded. Two officers of whom one was Capt. Thornton also killed. This unfortunate man met his death from the hand of Comandante Falcon leader of the Ranzeros. It is well for him that he met his fate thus, that he did not live to be disgraced

this, two out of 4 officers were killed, 12 out of 52
soldiers were down, and the men had all behaved
admirably, ~~shooting~~ after their leaders led
with Murketry. Capt. Hardie rode forward, a Mexican
officer met him, & they surrendered as prisoners of war.
The prisoners were carried to Matamoros safe & sound.
Gen. Arista, with a very polite note stating that they had
not sufficient Hospital accommodations, has sent one
to us the wounded prisoners. Their wounds had
been very well dressed. Capt. Hardie was permitted
to write a letter to Gen. Taylor this morning, giving him
the above report of the affair. He mentions that he is
now residing in the house of Gen. Ampudia, & eating at
his table, & that his gentlemanly address & constant
politeness almost make him forget that he is
a prisoner. He wished to send over for some money
but Gen. Arista refuses permission, saying that the
officers shall receive from him half pay, & the soldiers
one ration per diem. This is the very highest style
of military courtesy, and proves as Gen. Arista
wishes it to do, that Mexicans are not barbarians.
So much for the tale, which alas is no fable,
now for the moral. It teaches us the following
facts, which we need not pretend to close our

generated, and we now in the presence of an
Army commanded by — — — — — To prove
this let us take a hasty glance at our position
& prospects. From Pt. Isabel to our Camp is 27 miles.
Pt. G. is our depot, it is ~~also~~ reported to be pretty well
fortified, ~~there~~ being having for its defence 8.6 pieces & 4
other pieces. There are 80 soldiers, some sailors & Marines
can be landed from the Naval depots lying near, &
men in the employ of the Quarter Master make up the
whole number to about 400 ~~men~~. ^{The position is naturally strong} These ~~men~~
fight well for they have the sea behind them. To
supply our Arms a train of 2 or 300 waggon's loaded
with provisions usually makes one trip a week between
the depot & our Camp. From Pt. Isabel here there are
two roads about one mile apart. It is said that that
there is a third route by way of the Corpus Christi road
to the Laguna del Madre, thence along the coast. Going
out from our camp on either of the two first
routes, we pass through 3 miles of dense chaparral,
and for the next four miles alternately prairie &
chaparral, after this very slightly rolling prairie.
The 3^d road as yet I can get no correct information
of — indeed, our topog. engineers have done but little.
Thus much for the topography of the country.

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Why are we here? Could we not have waited at P. Isabel until the disposition of the Mexicans was ascertained, & then if necessary have obtained reinforcements before advancing; or was the course we have taken preferable from the moral effect which our presence opposite Matamoros is calculated to produce, & more particularly to obtain possession of the Chaparrille which, properly fortified & defended, must be nearly impregnable except to overwhelming forces? I incline to the latter opinion; & had all the succeeding steps of our leader been as wisely taken as the first, we should not now have to wish ourselves where many think we ought to have remained. (I must remark here that I have never heard it stated that Gen. Taylor occupied his present position with a view to holding possession of the Chaparrille, but as this affords to my mind the best reason for his being here, my subsequent remarks proceed ~~upon~~ upon this supposition.)

We arrived on the Rio Grande the 26th or 27th March. At the point occupied by our camp & fortifications the river forms a reentering angle on the Mexican side, so that it is in their power to erect batteries to take us in both flanks. The threats of the

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Mexican Commander obliged us to withdraw our
troops, excepting the ~~first~~^{3rd} Brigade, & place them in
a position to meet the enemy in case he should
cross below & march to attack us. The 2nd Brigade
defends a space from the Horse Shoe Bayo to the river
on one side; the 1st Brigade & similar space on the
other: the Dragoons, (there are now left but 5 comp. a-
mounting to about 225 sabs) with Ringgold's Artillery
form the centre being directly in front of the Bayo
which is usually impassable for horses. The interval
between the 1st Brig. & Dragoons, or between the left &
centre is considerable, perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or even $\frac{1}{3}$ mile; the
centre & right are near enough for mutual support.
The 3rd Brigade, to which I am attached, remains en-
camped on the river bank, within range of batteries
which take it both in front & flank. We are inten-
ded of course to prevent a crossing in the rear of
the line occupied by our Army, & to act also in
case of an engagement as a reserve. The true point
of attack would be our left. Let the enemy occupy
the attention of our right with skirmishers, (these
would sufficiently interest troops who like ours have
never been in action) let him throw 600 men
in the interval between our left & centre, with in-
structions to form in square & hold the Cavalry
in check for only 20 minutes, and let the whole

remaining ^{only} 93rd
force of this army be launched upon this wing.
If the attack is firm 800 men, ~~with~~ infantry alone,
must retire — where? To the place we occupy, except
by the batteries of the opposite shore — I will not proceed
however just now to fight this battle on paper for the
simple reason that I do not believe that it will
ever take place — the enemy's plans are probably
different. Let us mention some more facts.
The fate of Capt. Thornton's Squadron rendered it certain
that the enemy was in force between here & Pt. Isabel,
intercepting our communications. In what numbers?
To what purpose? Nobody knows. What course have
we pursued. The news of Thornton's affair reached us
early on the 25th. Immediately the whole Army was
set to work ~~to~~ complete with the utmost rapidity
the fort with 5 bastions which we have been working
at during the past 3 weeks. They are still employed
thus, & from 4 to 5 days at least are still necessary to
finish it entirely. Last night two couriers were
sent off with requisitions on the Governors of Louisiana
& Texas, for troops amounting altogether to 5000 men;
so at least it is reported in Camp. It is altogether
uncertain ~~xxx~~ ^{whether} these men will reach Pt. Isabel, & at
least three weeks must elapse before any considerable
body of men can arrive from N. O. So much
for what we have done — what should we have
done when we first arrived here, what ought

we to do now? I have said above that, the best reason for taking our present position was the importance of holding the chaparral. Several new roads should have been cut through it, ~~reduced~~ large enough for one or two Camps. Might have been thrown up at intervals, and strong scouting parties and patrols should have ~~been~~ traversed it constantly in every direction - these ~~plans~~ ^{remarks} are of course applicable only to the three miles of dense chaparral beginning just in front of our line. The object of such a plan is, of course, to keep the roads clear, & prevent the enemy from throwing up works which added to the natural defences of the country might, perhaps at this very moment have, effectually cut off our communications with the depot at P. Isabel. This plan would of course have been incompatible with the construction of the immense field work which has occupied the whole attention and labour of the Army since our arrival - This, as it appears to me, would have been no serious evil, a simple siege battery would have threatened the town as well, & it is time enough after peace is concluded to build works intended to be permanent. The manner in which this fort has been constructed is highly creditable to Cap. Mansfield, the Chief Engineer of the Army. The Army might have remained thus until the Mexicans should

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should determine for peace or war. — In the latter case, had it been strong enough to hold its position, it could do so; if not the way for retreat was open. How different in all probability is our present position; the Chaparelle is in possession of the enemy. I do not ask what ought to have been done the 25.th 26.th & 27.th early part of today the 27.th: it is not my wish to criticize the plans of my Commander when they may be only partly developed — I have stated what he has done — I know not what he means to do. The future however gives fair ground for every body's ~~own~~ plan, & I am free to lay down mine. They Mexicans may be in our rear for one of 3 purposes. It may be simply to cut off small parties and intercept our train should it attempt to come up. It may be actually to attack P. Isabel. Finally it may be to hold their position until, straitened for food, we are forced to attack them under heavy disadvantages. In either case our course is the same. Every hour during which we remain here, they are probably taking advantage of the various strong points along the Chaparelle to construct breast works, form abattis, break up the roads, perhaps even dig mines &c.

What are we to gain by delay? We have 15 days provisions
~~which~~ by half rations may hold out for 20 or 25 days.
 The Genl. has, I understand, forbidden a further issue
 of corn to the horses as in case of need it can
 be parched for our use. In 25 days, suppose 3000
 volunteers arrived at P. Isabel; what are they to do -
 to force their way through obstacles which 2500
 regulars cannot surmount? It would perhaps
 be as well act - to act without delay. In the course
 of this afternoon & early part of the night the fort
 could, I think, be put in ^{such} a state of defence that it
 could hold out 4 days without difficulty - Throw into
 this 500 men including all the sick of the Army, most
 of whom are able in case of attack to handle a
 musket very well. Leave in it 4. 18 pdr. & 4. 6 pdr.
 The Army would march tomorrow at daylight & if
 possible force ^{and destroy} the chaparral, ^{all works that may have been thrown up} & ~~crossed~~ ~~at once~~ march the
 same day to within 7 miles of P. Isabel - From this
 point the Dragoons go on the same night to the
 P., and by daylight 10. A.M. of the next day bring the
 provision train to the Army. The Army being put
 in motion at once arrives by the afternoon at the
 edge of the chaparral again and encamps. Next
 morning, if the Mexicans have again returned we
 force our way, drive them out, & occupy the chaparral
 in a way described already. This plan of course

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is based upon the supposition that we are not
to make an actual retreat to P. Isabel, & remain
there until reinforced. Not having correct informa-
tion concerning the Mexican force, I cannot form
any opinion upon that subject, but if a retreat is
meditated it should be immediately begun - our
18. pdr. thrown in the river if they cannot be transported,
and our fortification be blown up, so that the
enemy cannot use it. The advantages of my
plan are simply these. We obtain possession of the
Chaparells before it is rendered impregnable, or rather
impenetrable. We supply ourselves with provisions
for 30 days, if part of the time on 1/2 rations, for 40 days. Thus
we give plenty of time for large reinforcements to
arrive at Isabel, & by advancing can open communi-
cations with them at any time, as I believe
that there are no very strong positions beyond
the Chaparells. Finally - we by inactivity ruin the
reputation of our Army in the opinion of the
enemy, and what is worse in the estimation of our
own country men -

Having thus given vent to my opinion, I feel a
little easier, and considering 14 pages work enough
for one day beg leave to stop.

* April 29th I have but little to say today, & this is fortu-
nate for I feel no disposition to write. Something
begins to leak out concerning the Gen^ls intentions.

May 1st It appears that Gen. Taylor was unwilling to
leave his Fort until it should be entirely finished,
for this purpose the Army has remained constantly
at work upon it until to day. This afternoon at
3 o'clock the march is to commence. My disappointment
on first learning that I was to remain behind
I shall not attempt to describe; I hope that I am
now resigned to whatever the Lord wills. My greatest
fear is that I shall be left permanently in this
Fort even when, after the return of the Army & its
reinforcement by 5000 volunteers, offensive operations
shall be commenced. Perhaps I shall be more fortunate.
What price would I not pay at this moment
for a good Map of Mexico - without this it is im-
possible to form any plan for an offensive campaign.

It was ascertained two days ago that Cap. Stanton
is neither dead nor wounded but a prisoner in
Matamoros. His horse fell with him, probably
was shot, he fell under his horse & remained
incapable several hours. When restored to his
senses he found nobody left on the field, & tried
to make the best of his way home, but was captured.
The number killed turns out to be 11 or 12 out of
85, this is not great, but the Mexicans are evidently
bad marksmen.

It is now nearly 3 months since I left Matamoros
& in that time I have rec'd one letter - i.e. two in

one, this is the most trying part of my situation. The weather is oppressively hot, the Mercury has stood in a Hospital tent fully ventilated at 99°. ~~The~~ Fine sea breeze however usually springs up about 9 or 10 A.M. & affords some relief. There is not much sickness in Camp, most of the soldiers having become acclimated; for recruits, however, extreme care in diet is necessary.

The news having spread rapidly through Texas that volunteers are needed, ^{a few} small parties have succeeded by travelling through bye paths & chaparral in reaching the Camp. Several skirmishes however have occurred.

A party ^{of Texan rangers} commanded by Walker was attacked & 6 men killed. Another party came suddenly on a small detached camp, left without guards - a Mexican camp of course. The horses of the Texans were worn out, so they exchanged. Having plundered the camp of swords, pistols, carbines &c, they set off. The Mexicans returning found the camp robbed, & pursued them without success. It is highly probable that many little parties may have been cut up.

I have now to move my tent, & attend to many things, and must finish for the present. The opinions expressed concerning Cap: Thornton were derived from the report of Cap: Hardie - as Cap: Thornton is now ascertained to be living, & as his conduct may be in future the subject of official inquiry, alone all as he will probably write a report of his own, it is proper until then to withdraw ^{any} opinions which may have been formed ^{concerning} ^{his} ^{conduct} ^{and} ^{say} ^{at} ^{all}.

Some people write on counting down to make me
living, others in bomb proofs to save their lives; here is
a seeming similarity, but a vast difference. If I am able
I will say a few words of my present situation at the end
of my sheet, but first let us review the past week.

On Friday May 1st our Fort being nearly completed the
Army marched for P^t. Isabel. Expectations were very dif-
ferent, but the most common opinion was that, the
enemy would not attack the Army until it should
be embarrassed with the train while attempting to
return. It has already shown what would have
been a preferable plan, but with his present force
Arista perhaps did not feel able to do more than
attempt to ~~know~~ confine the Army at Isabel, & it may
be to storm us while cut off from all assistance. I had
been ordered by Med. Director to remain with the garrison
as Asst. to Dr. McPhail. My feelings as I watched our
small but gallant column file off before me all
filled with noble enthusiasts to meet & vanquish
our enemies, it is not for my pen to describe. My
brother officers of the 4th cheered me with the hope
that our fort would be attacked, but I knew that if
Arista was the talented officer he was reputed to be, that
unless in case, either of the defeat of our force,
or the arrival of large Mexican reinforcements,
we were safe from assault - for what strategic
end could be accomplished even by success providing
the enemy could no longer remain on the left bank of
the Rio Grande, & this could only be decided by the
result of a general battle? As the glitter of the
last bayonets vanished behind the chaparral, I re-entend
the Fort sick & exhausted. Our row of large Hospital
tents filled with the sick of the whole Army, who had been
left behind ought to have presented to my professional
eyes a more interesting & imposing sight than that
which I had just witnessed - it was not so; I took
to bed & was dosed myself. The next day went off very
quietly & without any improvement in my condition,
my fever was tolerably high, & I had great pain in my head
back - the weather (excruciatingly) hot, mercury about 97°. Our
recalls interrupted my unrefreshing sleep at the first dawn of
day, but from a second doze I was differently awakened.
X Sunday May 3rd is a day that I shall not soon forget.
Several loud reports in quick succession caused me
to sit up in bed, at least & almost to exclaim "at last,
is it possible?" A peculiar whizzing-iz, such as I had never
before heard quickly convinced me that we were now
actually being cannonaded & that the balls were popping
quite close to me. I have often wondered what my
feelings would really be under such circumstances, I
think I can say with truth that I felt calm & acted
coolly. Having dressed myself & stung my wound I
left our tent at this moment a ball with a

Burning fuse paper as it seemed close to me - it was a howitzer shell - I soon found that the men of the garrison were all in their stations, being the best works; the perfect order & quietness with which all this had been done, gave me great confidence in our men. The fire 18 pairs now began to reply & with good effect, for in a very few moments one of the 3 Mexican batteries was silenced - As I walked over to the opposite end of the fort, for my tent was pitched just by the magazine & I did not admire the neighbourhood, the Mexican mortars began to fire, they had, I believe, two, - one or two howitzers. At first only a few of the shells burst inside, but they were exploding above & around us. Presently one man was brought to our surgery wh. was a tent pitched near the middle of the Fort. He was killed - his skull smashed in by a round shot. His body was laid in an empty tent. While we were engaged in dressing the slight wounds of another soldier struck by ^{several} particles of a shell, one of these vile fiery globes fell ^{within} ^{about} ⁶ ^{yards} of us. Having passed through one of my Hospital tents which was filled with patients, & during which part of its course fortunately it did not explode, it fell & exploded in the empty tent - in which he had placed the body, near which, as I mentioned, we were standing - it melted our dead man into a jelly. Being unprovided with bomb proofs we had to make the best of it, when a shell fell inside, we fell on our faces and so many dirty coats I suppose were run over, we did not laugh however at each other's prostration until after the explosion. The bombardment & cannonading has now lasted 6 days, with more an interval during daylight of more than 2 or 3 hrs. Shells & balls are thrown into us from every side, but although a large number burst inside we have been wonderfully blessed by Providence, for up to this time we have but one death three severely wounded & 9 slightly wounded, yet until Wednesday night i.e. the fourth of the bombardment we were almost completely without shelter - Since that time however bomb proofs have been constructed by our Engineer Capt. Mansfield under which, so long as safe duties permit us to remain, we are pretty safe. Some exposure however is ^{still} occasionally necessary; in our case for example to visit the sick who are in another part of the Fort - to get food &c - although this is not very easily done. At night the bombardment usually ceases, & the Mexican light infantry surround our parapets & pepper us with musket balls which do little other harm than whistle pretty close to our ears.

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The misfortune of our gallant Commander, Maj. Brown is the most deplorable event which has yet happened to us. On Wednesday morning while our men were working at the bomb proofs, Maj. Brown stood by directing & receiving. Every ^{few} moments we were dodging & prostrating ourselves to escape the fragments of the bursting shells. On one occasion as I was rising from the sand & dust immediately ^{after} a shell had fallen without exploding, my ears were saluted with the cry "doctor doctor." I turned around & saw Maj. Brown who had been standing near me, now supported in the arms of 2 men - his right leg shot off, the jagged ends of the bones sticking out, & from them the ragged muscles & skin hanging down & dripping with blood. Dr. McPhail, assisted by Dr. Crattenden & myself immediately performed amputation of the thigh. The operation was very neatly performed, but owing to the miserable situation as regards air &c. in which the patient had to be kept during the continuance of the bombardment the result is altogether doubtful. Maj. Brown was selected as the ~~best~~ ^{best} officer, ^{fall three} present with our ^{best} ~~army~~ ^{army}, to have command of the Fort - his bravery & prudence have always commended esteem. As he was carried to our operating station, he addressed encouraging words to the men & exhorted us never to give up, & during the preparations for the operation he remarked "how fortunate it did not happen to a young man." Enough of such painful details, around me even now are other examples of the horrors of war. That which now greatly aggravates the unpleasantness of our situation

It is that, since the first day, we have scarcely been able, from want of ammunition, to fire a single shot in return for their numerous compliments. We have been constantly on the look out for an assault, particularly on Wednesday last. On that day the 4th of the bombardment the Mexicans sent the white flag proposing, that for the sake of humanity, we should surrender, as we were now surrounded by their forces, & our expected succours had been beaten back. The hour was given us to form our decision.

Although it was not distinctly intimated that our refusal would be immediately followed by a storm, yet this we fully expected, & the brightened countenances of officers & men were delightful to look upon. I use the word "we", but perhaps should choose some other, for my opinion has already been expressed, that there will be no storming until Gen. Taylor is defeated, and although the Mexicans assert that he has been, I do not believe it. He is however delaying his return much longer than we expected, perhaps waiting at Isabel for reinforcements expected from the States. Should this prove to be the case, my confidence in his abilities is at an end; but I have no idea of this kind, he is reputed to be a man of too much prudence to involve himself, & of sufficient firmness to act where he clearly ought to do so. God only knows how it will all end - our 3000 shots, ^{shells} have probably been already fired ^{into us} & still the shells fall thick & fast, we expected Gen. Taylor back in 4 days & it is now seven. As regards myself I have much to be thankful for - in the first place the fight cured me at once, ^{if my fever} I feel now

quite well - in the next place balls & shells have ⁵
passed very near me without injury - may that eye
which has hitherto watched over me continue to guard
me from all danger.

May 9th - Since yesterday morning a change has
taken place in our prospects which lights up every
countenance with a smile. About 3 P.M. we heard
the sound of distant cannonading in the direction
of the Pt. Isabel road. Seeing we have the sounds
did not become any more distinct, but after
this time each successive volley seemed nearer. The
bombardment of our Fort continued during this
time. About sunset the cannonade which had
apparently approached to within 5 miles ceased & has
not since recommenced. The Mexican batteries ~~which~~
from over the river have opened on us again this
morning but not briskly, and those on this side are
silent & perhaps have been deserted. It is reported that
the ^{distant} ~~forming~~ yesterday resulted from an attack made by
Gen. Taylor on Arista, who was beaten and during last
night retired across the Rio Grande. Gen. Taylor however
does not seem to have advanced any further this
morning, & we are entirely ignorant of his exact
whereabouts. He may have halted on the battle ground
to bury the dead, & rest his men - this afternoon
must render matters more certain.

I have more than once in this journal had occasion
to mention the name of our Chief Engineer Capt.
Mansfield, an officer of consummate courage & ability.
Who could have supposed that our little ~~and~~ ^{inexpe-}
rienced Corps of Engineers, could have furnished a man

capable, as it were on the spur of the moment, of constructing an admirable fortification, & who having never before seen fire exhibits under the most dangerous circumstances an admirable readiness of invention and most perfect coolness? If ever a merit war well earned in our Army, it has been by Capt. Mansfield, & it is a very general wish that our execution will see proper to give him his well deserved reward.

Men are certainly apt to exaggerate the ~~perils~~ perils to which they may have been exposed, & persons who rest their judgments concerning our dangers upon the list of killed & wounded, might suppose that we overrate them. For my own part I am only cordially agree with the universal opinion, an opinion entertained even by many who perhaps have scarcely ever before thought of a Superintending Providence, viz - that our preservation is almost miraculous. Shells have fallen in every part of the Fort, have killed a number of horses & mules, have exploded in the midst of groups of soldiers, & yet, as already mentioned, we have suffered but a trifling loss. Both balls & shells are now very accurately thrown by the Mexicans, but thanks to Capt. Mansfield during the last 3 days (the bombardment has lasted 4 including this day) we are perfectly protected except ~~when~~ when our duties oblige us to leave the bomb proofs.

Afternoon. Poor Major Brown is dead - The distant cannonade has recommenced.

May 15th - Should I some years hence read over the
 pages of my journal written during this Texan
 Campaign, without doubt it will cost me many
 blushes; for if even now I am aware of its
 thousand imperfections, how will it then appear
 to my more improved taste? It is written however
 only for pastime, & to serve as a record of facts,
 so that however my ^{own} feelings of ^{literary} pride may be
 humbled by the review of my blunders, I feel
 sure that my friends will charitably take into
 consideration the unfavorable circumstances under
 which I write, and refrain from all criticism
 My last pages were written from a bomb proof, into
 which after 4 days of exposure I had been enabled
 to insert myself - no, since there was added
 a ~~page~~ short account of the victories now called
 that of the 1st day of Palo Alto - the 2^d ^{Risaca de la Palma} I forget what
 There is but little additional matter of interest
 for the present - but I may in the first
 place correct some mistakes. The morning
 report of the Mexican Army shows on their
 side a force of 7180 - Their loss, killed, wounded,
 drowned in attempting to recross the river & prisoners
 must amount to very nearly 1500 men. We
 have lost killed & wounded 100, inclusive of the loss
 during the bombardment.

Since the battle our prisoners have been exchanged. Cap^t Thornton among others was sent over & has been put under immediate arrest to be tried for his conduct in the unfortunate affair already spoken of. — I am rejoicing to-day in having been relieved from my duties in the Fort, and assigned to the 5th Regt. one of the most gallant Regiments in the service. Dr. Conrad is my Senior, and I expect to get along very comfortably with him. The greatest inconvenience from which I suffer is the want of a tent, not having yet been enabled to procure one, I am forced to share with Dr. Conrad. At present this is not of much importance as we expect very soon to take the field for further ~~the~~ operations & in that case will have to bivouac. ~~Future~~ operations — what will they be? Our grand object is of course to take Matamoros. By many it is thought that the city would have surrendered had it been summoned the next day after the battle, but this opportunity, if it really existed, is past. Shall we wait for further reinforcements, or attempt a crossing at once? It was highly important for the reputation of the Regular Army that a battle should be fought & won without the assistance of volunteers — this has been done and the insolence of demagogues is silenced and

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trust force. The Army having however extricated
itself from a dangerous situation, and achieved
unaided a great victory, the volunteers will
be received with the utmost cordiality, and
in case of action will be put where they
can be "well peppered" Since such is the
favourable sentiment entertained ^{for} ~~for~~ ^{in regard} them,
we would feel no objection to having them
with us in the attack of Matamoros. Gen. Taylor
however, seems to feel himself strong enough
without them to commence the operation,
and we yesterday rec^d. orders to prepare to
march at 1. O'clk. The order was suspended
for some cause unknown, but it is now
whispered that we move tomorrow morning.
Rumours of this kind of course often prove false.
Boats are now being built - scows of the roughest
kind of course - whether we are to move up
the river to St. Brita 10 miles, or camp here is unknown,
the latter would of course be a very ticklish
business. What a tempting town Matamoros
seems to us poor fellows who are enduring the
hardships of perhaps the hardest campaign
since the Revolution - what a agreeable
change from ^{miserable} tents to fine houses, from pork & fat
& hard bread, to tender beef & vegetables, & as all
these luxuries will be paid for, the inhabitants will
really be benefited by the capture of their city, since

now the Mexican Army is quartered on them; and doubtless commits many deeds of rapine on its own people. I say the inhabitants will be benefited; of course I mean in case they surrender without a siege or storm - in the latter case Heaven have mercy on them - too horrible for thought may be their fate if taken by assault. For many reasons this campaign should be vigorously prosecuted, & finished if possible before ^{the middle of} July, for it will agree indifferently well with northern constitutions to carry on active operations in this climate during August & September. Besides this a rapid series of successes may bring the Mexican Government to a speedy conclusion. It is rumored that Paredes is approaching with reinforcements, but it is somewhat doubtful whether at this time he dares leave the City of Mexico.

May 21st. Camp near Matamoros.

Well at last we have crossed I will not say the Rubicon, for I trust that we are near ~~the~~ the end, not at the beginning of a war. The Rio Grande rolls behind us, Matamoros is ours. Arista's Army ~~is~~ retreating in confusion, it is even reported that his troops have mutinied, that some are coming in to surrender themselves

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prisoners of war. On Sunday May 14th we moved up
the river about 3 miles & encamped in some fields
with weeds about 3ft. high. About half a dozen boats
in all were prepared, including one small flat, &
arrangements were made for crossing next morning.
At daylight the light companies embarked - Two
eighteen pers. and two ^a batteries of 60, that of the
late Maj. Kingold, was commanded by Lieut. Bridgely,
were displayed upon the banks ready to protect
the crossing should any enemy appear upon the
opposite shore. In the midst of our operations
a deputation from Matamoros came to surrender
the city, so that all thoughts of resistance ^{on the part of the enemy}
were laid aside & we had ample time to cross
at our leisure. A large rope was stretched from
one side of the river to the other & the heavily
laden boats drawn across by it. The day was
beautiful & the scene the most striking I
had ever witnessed. The river as far as the
channel was filled with men pushing out
the boats, and hundreds of horses were splashing
and swimming & finally dashing up the opposite
banks when they were caught by men stationed
for the purpose. Some 15 or 20 Texan Rangers
attempted to cross on horseback, but the current
being too swift they were all thrown, some
held on to the main, some to the tail (Bot

Harris's inflexible mode) & all managed to get safely
over. Not so well faced the Dragoons. A Lieut.
Stevens & Dragoons, attempted to cross with two
of his men. They stopped ~~at~~ on the edge of the
channel to let their horses drink, thus permitting
some 50 or 60 loose horses, who had been driven
in to follow them over, to crowd close around
them. Finally they entered the channel, but
scarcely reached the middle before the utmost
confusion began. The horses struck one another
were carried down by the current & whirled
by their unskilful riders in every direction.
At one moment I saw Stevens & a Dragoon
soldier with their horses head to head, rearing
in the water & striking directly at each other,
the horses were thrown back, & the riders off,
before a boat could reach them they were drowned.
You cannot imagine anything more dreadful
than that scene, three men swimming
amidst a crowd of horses, now rising now
sinking, and the shouts & conflicting directions
of hundreds of spectators on either bank.
It was painful, but a few moments and
relief by the immediate friends of the deceased
the unfortunate affair was almost forgotten—
so little value is here set upon human life—
so little sympathy felt for human suffering.

7. Indeed this is one of the worst features of War
that it blunts, I trust only temporarily, the finest sen-
sibilities of our natures, & produces a strange
feelings of indifference to life & death, to the
misery of others, & even to our own misfortunes.
I went to the field of battle & passed me whole nights
& days among the wounded, the dying, & the dead—
at moments my heart bled for their sufferings
and I could almost have bowed my head & wept,
but alas what a heart have I—to attend their
despairing cries, their dying moans, brought me
indeed to their relief, but rather by appealing
to my principles, than to my feelings; for still
occasional musketry sounded through the chaparral,
and the trophies of our victory with the vivid
descriptions of those who had taken part in it,
inflamed my mind with martial excitement
incompatible with strong feelings of compassion.
I remembered however my duty as an officer,
& more especially as a Christian, & believe that
I did not desert my post, till when utterly
exhausted I was relieved by Mexican surgeons;
who, I am sorry to say, instead of following my
example & working all night, went quietly to
bed & left their poor wretches to suffer—the
next day for want of fresh dressing, most
of the wounds were fly blown!

To return from feeling to facts.

8. (Page 8 - owing to a mistake in writing)

After the light Comp. & Dragoons, our Regiment ^{was} ~~was~~ crossed. I paid a Mexican 50 etc. to get my horse over & he managed it very well - my \$7.50 horse by the way turns out a trump, he answers my purpose very well. The Army having at last formed upon the opposite bank, (i.e. upon this bank) the ^{other} Regiments cheering us as we passed, & ~~we set out~~, as we supposed, to lead the band in a triumphal march through the city, with music playing & colours flying. At last we arrived in the suburbs, and every soldier's heart beat with pride - it was to be the first time that an American Army had entered a conquered city, and all longed to display their martial bearing to the admiring gaze of dark eyed *señoritas* - Not such were the thoughts of unromantic Old Joe; we skirted the town without entering it, and marched on to pitch our camp where it now stands, in some fields on the banks of the river. Our waggons not having crossed we were unable to get tents & had to bivouac without dinner or supper, unless we except some miserable cakes bought out for sale by Mexicans. Capt Scott, of Mackinnaw's celebrity, & I lay down under a blanket that I had strapped on my saddle, but I was lucky enough afterwards to get some additional bedding.

Gen. Taylor may perhaps have excellent reasons for not leading his army through the city, but he could not possibly have inflicted on us a severer disappointment. The men having fought well & worked hard felt that they had a right to the ^{slightest} ~~slightest~~, though really great gratification of marching through the conquered city, and their complaints were bitter. After taking possession of our ground for encamping, we got permission towards evening to go up & see the town which is about 3/4 mile dist. — and now for the grand city of Matamoros. If every Spanish town is like this, and it is said to be a fair sample, miserably & much to be pitied are the Spaniards. There is about the city an appearance of delapidation, owing perhaps in some measure to its being deserted by most of the genteel inhabitants, & to the ruins of a large Cathedral in the Plaza. The Plaza is a large square of about 2 acres in the center of the town, it is surrounded on one side by the ruins just mentioned, opposite are the barracks & stay backs, and on the other two sides houses & stores. There are a few good houses in the place, but intermixed with smaller ones, & with thatched mud houses. The side walks are paved, but not the streets which in bad weather must be detestable. The dry good

stars look very well, but I have not yet found
 where to buy a tin basin for washing, an article
 which I have not yet been able to procure since
 joining the Army in Texas. Talking of these little
 personal comforts, at last I have a tent, in which
 I much prefer living to any quarters to be procured
 in Matamoros, even if I were at liberty to live there.
 There is in the city a Restaurant tolerably good,
 a billiard room, & some fine wine establishments
 for those who patronize such places. The houses
 of the English & French Consuls & of Gen. Mejia are
 the finest in the place. I was yesterday visited
 but declined, to visit a Capt. Baragon. He was wounded
 in the battle, & I had him conveyed from the field
 to a tent. Having examined his case carefully I
 had no hesitation in recommending immediate
 amputation of the thigh which was badly shattered
 with grape. He had served a year in Philad.
 was evidently a very gallant fellow, about 27 yrs
 old & withal handsome - my interests in him
 was great. He is a member of one of the wealthiest
 families of San Louis de Potosi. On account of
 the importance of his case I feared taking upon
 myself the whole responsibility of operating &
 asked the opinion of some veteran officers. The
 Med. Director was disposed to side with me, but
 other opinions were so decided against it

that I declined operating & handed him over to the care
of the Mexican Surgeons. Since his arrival in Matamoros
his wound was conveyed after being exchanged, he has been
getting worse, & 2 days since wrote to Gen. Taylor to
beg him to send an American Surgeon to amputate his
limb as affording his only chance of safety. The Med.
Director went to visit him, having invited me to accom-
pany him which at the time I was prevented from
doing. His condition is reported as almost desper-
ate & it is too late now to operate.

I know not what man I can say more of Matamoros
like all that I have seen of Mexico it is poor enough.

The 5th Regt is a very fine Regiment - I like it
better than any with which I have yet served. The
Officers are much more quiet than those of the
4th and have shown me the greatest politeness. I
am now a member of a mess formed of 7 officers,
but as in the field a large mess is inconvenient, I
have procured my tea kettle, frying pan, & sauce pan,
with tin plates & iron spoons, & am ready to begin on
my own hook, or with Dr. Conard & perhaps one more.
I often laugh when I think how my dear mother
would look to see her particular son sit down
to a meal composed of hard biscuit fried in pork fat,
and some of the latter stewed up with potatoes &
tough beef (if that luxury is to be got); on top of this
tea with the heaviest kind of brown sugar, & all

cut & drunken out of the very distinct plates, cups,
knives & spoons. A favorite dish of mine is a little
fried rice mixed with flour & fried in pork fat — you
know how fond I have always been of things fried in lard

And now to finish this day's journal, a speculation
as to future movements. We have rested now 2 days
near Matamoros, & that evidently it is not the
design of the Gen. to pursue clear on the heels of
Arista; in all probability we will remain here
until reinforced by Gen. Persifer Smith who has probably
by this time nearly 1500 volunteers at P. Isabel.
Of this officer we all entertain the highest opinions,
and for reasons not to be expressed on paper are
anxious for his arrival. Being reinforced, should
we hear nothing from Parades, ^{OUR} ^{NEXT} ~~our~~ ~~next~~ ~~move-~~
ment will probably be up the river 75 miles to
Comargo, on our way should that be necessary to
Monterey a town of some 15000 inhabitants, & com-
manding the passage to the city of Mexico. Such is the
plan of operations & the only one that I have heard
announced in Camp. Knowing but little of the topography
of the country I do not like to hazard an opinion, yet
unless something with which I am unacquainted proves it
to be impracticable, I would pursue a different course.
I would when reinforced to 6000 men, march for Tampico
& there establish a new base; deserting the old line, though
leaving a garrison on the Fort Brown to hold Matamoros. All
other recruits & would then be sent to Tampico ^{direct from N.O.} which would
be my main depot — This is much preferable to going round by
Monterey which itself is equally dist: with Tampico from Mexico, & 800 miles from here.

June 12th I resume today, after what appears to me a long interval, the writing of my journal, not, however, because I feel particularly disposed to write or have much to write about. The consequent changes of position to which I have been, and probably for some time will continue to be subject, by preventing me from making permanent arrangements of any kind, interfere somewhat with my comfort — not materially however; though I must confess that I long for the time when I shall be sufficiently settled to feel authorized to make use of the sheets which I brought with me, but which still lie packed in my box. And when shall we be settled? With our present limited means of transportation, the Army cannot move from here, nor can detachments of our 500 men considerably increase their distance from the Depot at Isabel.

Our force here is daily increasing by the arrival of Volunteers, and if the accounts rec^d by newspapers from the States are to be relied on, before long 20,000 men will be concentrated, — where they are not wanted, — on the Rio Grande.

We have just rec^d a report of the death of Louis Philippe — which is I earnestly trust false: at this moment the peace of the world might be endangered by that event.

Gen. Persifer Smith has been appointed Col. of the new Regiment of Cavalry, all the officers of which, with one single exception have been taken from civil life — this is a republican reward to the gallant graduates of West Point who distinguished themselves at Palo Alto & Misaca de la Palma — how strong are the incentives to bravery and devotion in our service!

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I went yesterday to the Quarter Master's Office to attend to some business - He occupies a portion of a building the finest in Matamoros. Before the city was deserted by the Mexican troops this building served for the joint residence of Gen. Mejia, and of the French & English Consuls. It is a square building enclosing a Court yd. Each front must be over 100 ft. The lower rooms in this, as in most houses of this city, are intended for store houses; the upper ones are large & airy with balconies both ~~out~~ the street & on the Court yd., to which ^{latter} access is had by means of an arch way through the northern front. The cost of this house was \$200,000, an enormous sum, but all the timber had to be brought from N.O. which accounts for the expense. The commonest thin wooden doors cost \$15 each.

Capt. Miles, now commanding our Regiment, has just notified me that himself & staff have been invited to attend an oration to be delivered at Gen. Arista's A.D. (formerly his) - I am afraid that being one of the staff I shall have to go; feeling no inclination for a crowd in this hot weather, I will ~~not~~ close my portfolio, & go try to be excused.

June 14th Matamoros begins already to assume something of the air of an American city, the streets are filled with busy people, and the shops appear to be patronized. Five days ago I went through more of the town than I had before seen, and must confess that my first feelings of disappointment led me to underrate, ^{slightly} the value of our conquest. The market place is both handsome & convenient. It is a large square, the buildings on three sides of which have in front ~~of~~ ^{wide} arched porticoes of

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brick painted blue. In addition to this there is a fine centre building two stories high, the upper room used perhaps as a store room of some kind, the lower being arched like that part of the Plaza Market under the old court house, only much more extensive.

The Mexican race, if one may call that a race which is compounded of Spanish, Indian and Negro blood, is in many respects peculiar. The men are well formed and apparently athletic. They are certainly capable of great endurance, but their physical strength (my friend Lieut. Hanson assures me is not to be compared with that of our men — in this respect appearances are very deceitful for their muscular development appears to be very fine — The men are rather good looking the women not so. Their dispositions, as respects quiety at least, resemble the French.

Fandangos are the rage with some of the officers; at one given last night, I am told, there were about 40 present. The etiquette at these assemblies is not very strict, but somewhat peculiar — A gentleman steps up to any lady and asks her to dance, i.e. if he knows enough Spanish to make use of his tongue, if not pantomime answers very well. After the dance he leads his partner to the refreshment-table, and must pay a bit (12c. etc.) for each article she chooses to partake of.

Our rides are still restricted by the bandits so that it is unsafe to go out-unarmed and in company. A few days ago while riding through the chaparral alone & without even a sword I have good reason to think

That one of these rascals sent a rifle ball at
me - Lieut Potter of our Reg. was also shot at
two days before; this I had not heard ~~but~~ or
should have been more prudent, as I mean to
be in future - the fellow could not have been
more than 30 or 25 yds from me - he was careful
not to come out of the bushes, & being unarm'd
entirely I did not care to rush in when I
saw the smoke of his rifle - I am glad to
find that the constant whirring of balls of
every description during the bombardment
has given me a proper degree of coolness on
occasions of danger.

The number of boats on the river is increasing;
tomorrow we will ascend ~~the~~ to Rhinoco -
Should this prove practicable the next step
will be to Comago - Transportation in this
way will be much better than by a train.
A rumour of the landing of Santa Anna at
Oera Cruz, & his favourable reception by the
citizens of that place, begins to be credited.
He would speedily end the war by treaty - and
then - ah then what becomes of me? Will
I remain in one of the new Posts to be estab-
lished in this country, or can I return to
the North, near my beloved home? God only
knows - it is in Him alone I put my trust.
It is said that several more surgeons have
been ordered out, among others Drs. Finley & Hitchcock,
I trust this is true.

It is now about two weeks since we have
had a mail and I am most anxious to hear
from home; I must send a letter this afternoon.