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Bombardment of Vera Cruz

THE WAR
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
ILLUSTRATED,

EMBRACING
PICTORIAL DRAWINGS OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL CONFLICTS,

BY
CARL NEBEL,
AUTHOR OF "A PICTURESQUE AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL VOYAGE IN MEXICO,"

WITH
A DESCRIPTION OF EACH BATTLE,

BY
GEO. WILKINS KENDALL,
AUTHOR OF "THE TEXAN SANTA FÉ EXPEDITION," ETC., ETC.



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THE CAPTURE OF VERA CRUZ.

As early as November, 1846, or soon after the news of the capture of Monterey had reached the Government at Washington, the reduction of Vera Cruz, with the strong castle of San Juan de Ulua, was determined upon. The command of this formidable undertaking was entrusted, by President Polk, to General Scott, the senior officer and commander-in-chief of the army of the United States, and every exertion was made to render the success of the expedition certain.

After hurriedly making all the necessary requisitions for heavy ordnance, military stores, transport ships, surf boats, and every thing deemed indispensable for the descent upon the Mexican coast and after operations, General Scott sailed from New York and arrived at New Orleans in December. At the latter city, then the head quarters of General Jesup the chief of the quartermaster's department, the American commander made such farther requisitions as the nature of the enterprize called for. He then sailed for Brazos Santiago, where he arrived in the early part of January, 1847.

In the meantime the island of Lobos, a small patch of sand and chaparral on the Mexican coast, had been selected as the point of rendezvous for the expedition. This island is about one hundred and twenty miles northwest of Vera Cruz, seven from the main land, with sufficient water inside to afford shelter for a large fleet, and thither all the transports were ordered to sail as fast as they could be got ready. General Scott meanwhile passed the greater part of the month of January in visiting the posts on the lower Rio Grande, from Matamoros to Camargo, inspecting the troops and detailing such as he deemed necessary for carrying out his plans; but believing from the first the number to be inadequate and the composition unequal to the work, he had as early as November called upon General Taylor for all his regular infantry—the veteran commands of Twiggs and Worth—and these troops were immediately put in motion for the coast. By the latter part of February, great as was the distance many of them were compelled to march, and annoying as were the delays in providing transport vessels, the greater part of both regulars and volunteers had reached the place of rendezvous under Lobos. The number of craft here by the 1st of March, the most of them square-rigged vessels, was over one hundred, and by the 3d nearly all were under sail for Anton Lizardo, a good and safe anchorage twelve miles to the southward of Vera Cruz.

On the 6th of March, General Scott having in the meantime visited Tampico and afterwards arrived at Anton Lizardo, a thorough reconnoissance was made of the coast from the latter place to a point north of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan de Ulua, the object being to select the best position on the beach at which to land the troops. This reconnoissance was made on board the small steamer Petrita, and General Scott was accompanied not only by Worth, Patterson, Pillow and all his principal field and staff officers, but by Commodore Conner, then in command of the large squadron on the station. When within range of the heavy guns of San Juan de Ulua the steamer was repeatedly fired upon, yet fortunately without being struck, although many of the shot passed close. The landing place finally selected was the beach opposite the Island of Sacrificios, a point about three miles south of Vera Cruz. In calm weather the shore was here always accessible for the large surf boats expressly built for the landing of troops and heavy guns, and although within range of the 13-inch mortars in the castle was still deemed the best place at which to effect the debarkation.

The fleet at Anton Lizardo, by the 8th of March, numbered over one hundred and fifty sail, including men-of-war and steamers. On the morning of the 9th, the different vessels of the squadron crowded with soldiers, while many of the transports and steamers also were filled, advantage was taken of a light but favorable breeze from the southeast to move up under Sacrificios. From the anchorage at this island the disembarkation was to take place, and the most unwonted excitement now prevailed throughout the fleet.

Favored by the wind, which gradually freshened as the morning wore, the vessels came up in beautiful order. General Scott was on board the steam-ship Massachusetts, receiving repeated cheers as his tall and commanding form was descried by his eager and excited soldiers. The larger frigates had nearly three thousand men crowded upon their decks, their bright muskets flashing in the sun, while the smaller vessels were literally alive with troops. Over twelve thousand soldiers were suddenly to be thrown upon a hostile coast, within sight and range of one of the strongest castles in the world, and each man anticipating that an enemy would confront him on the beach and oppose his landing. By 2 o'clock

in the afternoon every vessel had arrived under Sacrificios in safety, and casting anchor without an accident the work of transferring the troops to the surf boats commenced immediately. At the same time the Musquito fleet under Tatnall, consisting of the small men-of-war steamers Spitfire and Vixen and four or five schooner-rigged gun-boats, stood in as close to the shore as the water would permit, where, forming in a line parallel with the beach, they were in readiness to cover the landing. Some half dozen foreign men-of-war, English as well as French and Spanish, were lying at the anchorage of Sacrificios at the time, their tops crowded with anxious spectators.

By 3 o'clock Worth's entire division, numbering four thousand five hundred regulars, were safely transferred to the surf boats. These boats were under charge of the younger officers and manned by the sailors of the squadron, and at the given signal, the men bending vigorously upon their oars, the long line pulled away for the shore, but a mile distant from the point of disembarkation. There were sixty-five boats in all, the average number of troops in each being seventy; and the eyes of the soldiers still on board the vessels, as well as of the thousands of sailors attached to the men-of-war and transports, followed them with intense anxiety as in unbroken order they moved towards the point of landing. As they passed Tatnall's flotilla, anchored in line within easy range of the beach, loud and exciting cheers rose upon the water, and these cheers, taken up by the larger vessels, were echoed and sent back with hearty vigor. Immediately in rear of the landing-place rose a ridge of sand hills, scarcely pistol shot distant, behind which it was supposed a force of the enemy was lying concealed. A masked battery of even 6-pounders, well served, might sink half the boats before the beach was gained, and the excitement now increased to an intensity which caused every man to hold his breath. But the fleet of barges kept steadily on in the same admirable order, the soldiers standing up, musket in hand, ready for instant battle although on an element to which they were unaccustomed.

Close in to the shore the breakers, for in the calmest weather there is always a slight ground swell opposite Sacrificios, were now tossing with not a little violence; but taking advantage of the roll of the surf, and the sailors bending with renewed energy upon their oars, the boats were sent in line to a point within twenty yards of dry land. At this instant the entire force, jumping into the water as one man and holding high their muskets and cartridge boxes, dashed to the shore, and the different regiments, forming with wonderful alacrity, were sent over the first ridge of sand hills at a run. Yet not an enemy was within range. On the more distant ridges clouds of cavalry and light foot troops were descried, watching the landing of the invaders; but not a musket was discharged at Worth, either while approaching the shore or after the beach was gained.

A louder shout than ever now went up, as the landing was effected, a shout which was again taken up and sent back across the waters by the thousands on board the vessels. Between four and five thousand men had gained a foothold upon the enemy's soil, without even a single soldier receiving a scratch from the ordinary casualties which attend such operations, and the exultation of all could not be restrained. The surf boats returning immediately to the fleet, Patterson's volunteer division was next landed in the same order, and still without an accident. Accompanying this division was Jesup, who had volunteered his services. By 10 o'clock at night the reserve division of regulars under Twiggs was also landed, with several light pieces of artillery and Talcott's mountain howitzer and rocket corps; while with such skill was the entire disembarkation conducted, and so promptly did the officers and sailors of the gallant navy respond to the call made upon their services, that over twelve thousand soldiers were set on shore in a space of time incredibly short considering the labor performed, and without the slightest casualty of any kind to either branch of the service. Why the Mexicans did not at least open upon the crowded surf boats as they approached the shore, with the advantages of retreat so much in their favor, is certainly strange. During the night a brisk rattling of musketry, opening upon one of the American pickets, showed that they were in the vicinity; but with all their superior knowledge of the ground, and with so many roads open for escape, no other hostile demonstration was made.

On the morning of the 10th of March, the weather still continuing pleasant, the work of landing heavy guns, ammunition and provisions commenced, while at the same time active preparations were made to form the line of investment—a task of incredible labor, owing to the difficulties of the ground. Vera Cruz is a walled city, fronting upon the water. Directly

opposite, half a mile distant and built upon a reef at immense labor and expense, rises the strong castle of San Juan de Ulua, materially improved and strengthened prior to the American descent, and completely commanding every approach by water. At the southern extremity of the city, near the beach, is Fort Santiago; on the northern extremity, and also near the beach, is Fort Conception, both strong and commanding works. Between these, nestled within the walls which completely enclose the city in rear, are the smaller forts or bastion works of San José, San Fernando, Santa Barbara, Santa Gertrudes, San Javier, San Mateo and San Juan, all garnished with heavy artillery so disposed as to rake every approach. The armament in the castle and in the different forts, much of it new, amounted to over four hundred guns. The garrison consisted of five thousand regular troops, and the command was vested in General Morales, an officer who, whatever other military qualifications he might lack, possessed at least unquestionable obstinacy and bravery.

To reduce the formidable castle and city General Scott had but little over twelve thousand men in all, divided into three divisions. The 1st, under Worth, was composed of the 2d and 3d artillery, and the 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th infantry, all regulars. To this force should be added Blanchard's Louisiana and Williams's Kentucky volunteers, two strong companies of well drilled and effective men. The 2d division, under Twiggs, was composed of the 1st and 4th artillery, the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 7th infantry, and the mounted rifles now acting on foot—all regulars, and, as was the case with Worth's troops, under excellent discipline. The 3d division, under Patterson, consisting entirely of volunteers, was composed of the 1st and 2d Tennessee regiments, the 1st and 2d Pennsylvania, part of the 3d and 4th Illinois, and the New York, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama troops. To all should be added the marines from the squadron under Captain Edson, with Harney's dragoons and a body of Tennessee volunteer cavalry, although neither of the latter corps had arrived at the time the landing took place. As the oldest artillery officer present, Bankhead had immediate command of that arm, while the highly talented engineer corps was under the control of Totten, the chief of that important branch of the service.

The original requisitions, made out by the American commander in November, had called for no less than fifty 10-inch mortars, with a proportionate number of 24-pounders and other breaching guns; but owing to vexatious delays in getting this heavy but necessary siege train on board the transports, and the adverse weather and long voyage many of them encountered, but one-fifth had reached Sacrificios by the 10th of March. The work of landing such as had arrived went on however with energy, while active preparations were immediately made to commence and carry out the work of investing the city.

The right of the line, looking upon the southern approaches to Vera Cruz, was entrusted to Worth, General Scott also establishing his headquarters at this point from its close proximity to the fleet. Patterson's volunteers were to occupy the centre, looking directly into the heart of the city, while Twiggs was to take up his station on the northern beach, but prolonging his line so as to connect with that of Patterson. The entire line of investment, cutting off the inhabitants and garrison from all communication with the interior, was thus to be extended over a space of five miles, the vallies between the rolling sand hills, although many of them were within range of the enemy's heavy guns, being selected for the encampments of the troops. Immediately outside the walls of the city, and running back some eight hundred yards, the ground was comparatively flat, sandy, and covered in some places with chaparral, while a collection of thatched huts or small houses, the residences of the poorer classes, were scattered about without any regard to order. In rear of these, on the southwest, was a cemetery, enclosed by a light wall and having a small church in the centre. Farther back commenced the undulating sand hills, many of them rising over two hundred feet in height, the space between them being frequently covered with a dense undergrowth of thorny brush, while in some places trees of larger size were found. Such was the ground on which the line of investment was to be formed. During the prevalence of the *norther*s—and at this season they were of frequent occurrence—the air was filled with clouds of flying sand, excessively annoying to the men and from which even the vallies afforded but little shelter. Previous to the landing of the troops, several daring and important reconnoissances had been made, by Surgeon Wright, Midshipman Rogers, and others attached to the squadron blockading Vera Cruz, with the view of ascertaining the locality of a powder magazine supposed to be in the rear of the city and to gain an accurate knowledge of the ground. In one of these reconnoissances Rogers had been taken prisoner; but Wright, who was fortunate in escaping, was now on shore with the army under General Scott, imparting such information as he had gained during his observations.

After Worth had carried a redoubt in his front on the morning of the 10th, and had taken up his position, Patterson was despatched to his left and in the direction of a pond of water called the Laguna Malibran. Beyond this was a dense growth of chaparral, interspersed with trees of large size, and still farther, in a northwest direction, rose some of the higher sand hills. A fire of heavy shells had been opened upon Worth

at an early hour in the morning, both from the city and castle, several of which burst directly within his lines, but fortunately without causing injury. As Patterson approached an old but strong ruin near the laguna, occupied as a magazine, a sharp fire of musketry was opened upon Pillow's brigade of Tennesseans and Pennsylvanians by a body of infantry. But bringing up a 6-pounder from Taylor's battery, under William H. French, and ordering that officer to open upon the building, the enemy were speedily dislodged and forced back into the chaparral. Pillow at once took possession of the magazine, containing a quantity of ammunition, and pushing on towards the intersection of an unfinished railway with the Medelin road, again came upon a force of both cavalry and infantry. A brisk skirmish resulted in beating the Mexicans back towards the higher sand hills, behind the crests of which they once more rallied; but the 1st Pennsylvania and 2d Tennessee regiments, moving steadily up, they were again driven with loss, and sent in full flight under the guns of the city. This affair closed the operations on the 10th of March. At intervals during the day, partly with the intention of gaining the range, flights of shells were sent by the besieged in the direction of the American lines. They however either fell short, or those which reached did but little execution.

Early on the morning of the 11th Patterson was again in motion, Quitman being in advance with the Georgians, Alabamians and South Carolinians. In his front the enemy appeared in considerable force, both cavalry and infantry, with the evident intention of checking his movement; but after a series of sharp skirmishes, in which a company of Georgia rifles under Davis were thrown in advance, the Mexicans were forced back under the walls of the city. In these affairs the Georgians and South Carolinians, taking an active part, sustained some loss, Dickinson, the lieutenant-colonel of the latter, being seriously wounded. A steady fire was meanwhile kept up from the forts and castle. The shells from the former were continually bursting on some part of the American lines, while clouds of sand, thrown high in air as by some invisible agency, marked the passage of the heavy round shot as they struck among the hills. Twiggs had put his division in motion at an early hour, with orders to pass the volunteers and take up his position on the northern beach. This movement brought his men under the fire from the city, by which Alburta, a deserving officer of the 2d infantry was killed, with a sergeant of the 4th artillery and a private of the rifles. Frequent skirmishes also took place in front, with small parties sent out to check the advance. Knowing every foot of ground, the Mexicans had chosen the strongest positions from which to assail the invaders; but Twiggs sending out the rifles, and at the same time pressing forward with the infantry, the front was speedily cleared. The greatest difficulty was experienced in moving the field batteries, for although the guns were light, the horses were utterly unable to draw them through the ponds and heavy sand which met them at every step. The soldiers however attaching drag ropes, and bending to the work with energy, the pieces were fairly lifted across the low grounds and over the ridges, and on reaching the northern beach were placed in positions where they could rake every approach in case the enemy either made a sortie from the city, or attempted an attack upon the rear with the intention of throwing in supplies or reinforcements to the garrison. With the arrival of Twiggs on the shore north of Vera Cruz the line of investment had been drawn entirely around the city, and with loss trifling when the great advantages possessed by the enemy are considered. But Morales appeared to rely almost solely upon his strong forts and heavy guns; for many of the small parties, encountered in the vallies and behind the sand hills, were partisan bands, unconnected with the regular garrison and operating at their own risk. One of these was commanded by a young Spanish priest, Padre Jarauta, a man without principle yet of great activity and bravery. His after operations as a guerilla chief rendered him somewhat famous.*

A violent norther, springing up on the 12th of March, cut off all communication between the shore and the transports under Sacrificios. The day previous a detachment of New Yorkers, under Shields, had engaged with an equal number of the enemy in the rear, driving them after a short skirmish. A small party of the same regiment had another brush on the 12th with a body of lancers sent out to watch the movements of the invaders. The horsemen were driven back under the walls with loss, and no other attempt was made in that direction. It is true that during the afternoon Morales sent a flight of shells upon the American lines, but the heavy wind carried them wide the mark. On the 13th the gale abated, when the work of landing heavy guns and ammunition was renewed. Worth had meanwhile taken possession of a strong ruin near

* Of all the partisan leaders who infested the road between Vera Cruz and Puebla, after the Americans had reached the latter city, this Padre Jarauta caused the greatest loss and annoyance. His guerilla operations were not confined to the *tierra caliente*, and to the heights about the Puente Nacional and Plan del Rio, but extended to the mountain passes between Jalapa and Peroté. Large numbers, incited partly by a hope of plunder, joined his standard during the summer of 1847, and being well mounted, and knowing every part of the country and the best points for ambuscade or open attack, the movements of even the largest detachments of Americans were harassed and retarded. In 1848, after peace between the United States and Mexico was concluded, Jarauta was engaged in an open rebellion to overturn the existing Government of the latter, and being captured in an unsuccessful encounter was immediately shot.

an old lime-kiln, a commanding point by the water's edge within eight hundred yards of Fort Santiago, and less than a mile from the castle itself. Under cover of night a small but trusty force, under Vinton, was thrown into this ruin, and although at daylight it was exposed to a heavy fire, the position was gallantly held. A series of daring reconnoissances were in the meantime made, by night as well as by day, for the purpose of ascertaining the most advantageous points at which to commence the work of opening trenches and establishing batteries. Every approach to the city was thus thoroughly examined, the indefatigable engineers even pushing their observations up to the very walls of the city.

On the 14th of March the norther again set in with fury, and lasting until the night of the 16th, prevented the landing of ordnance and military stores from the fleet. Meanwhile, with incredible labor, the weaker points in the curtain of investment had all been strengthened. Twiggs had thrown his left upon the little hamlet of Vergara, a point on the beach commanding completely the main road to Jalapa, and had so disposed his division that every attempt of the Mexicans to pass his line failed. A daring courier, attempting to break through with important despatches from Morales, was shot from his horse, and although the man escaped in the darkness, his papers were taken and sent to head-quarters. The greatest difficulty was experienced in sending out provisions and ammunition to the northern beach. A small number only of the mules and horses intended for transportation had been landed, and of these many were so badly bruised or stiffened, from rough weather and long confinement on shipboard, that they were for the time useless. The heavy labor of transporting ammunition, camp equipage and supplies across the dreary waste was thus thrown upon the men, while to add to their discomfort the air was constantly filled with clouds of sand, coming with such force that the faces and eyes of the soldiers were stung and blinded to a degree almost insupportable. During the prevalence of the norther a number of vessels, endeavouring to work their way into the anchorage at Anton Lizardo, had been cast ashore, and a heavy ship, with a large number of dragoon horses on board, was completely wrecked and the animals drowned. Other vessels, with cavalry horses on board, were so tossed about in the gales that great numbers were killed or rendered unfit for service, and Harney was thus unable to mount more than a single full company of his men when the storm abated. To add to the annoyances of the soldiers of the besieging army they were at intervals receiving a fire from both city and castle—a fire doubly molesting, although it did but little injury, from the fact that it could not be returned. But on the 15th the spirits of all were cheered by the welcome intelligence, received by a small schooner sent express from Brazos Santiago, of General Taylor's great victory over Santa Anna at Buena Vista, while on the following day the troops were farther inspirited as Commodore Conner's heavy guns belched forth a salute in honor of the achievement, directly within hearing of the garrison of Vera Cruz.

The Spanish consul within the city, under a white flag, had sent a note out to the American commander on the second day after the landing had been effected, asking that in any operations that might ensue the persons and property of his countrymen residing at Vera Cruz might be respected. On the 14th General Scott returned an answer to this note, to the effect that as far as practicable the Spanish subjects and their property would be respected. At the same time the consul was told that, in carrying the city—whether by bombardment and cannonade, or assault, or by all—it would be difficult for the Americans, and particularly in the night time, to distinguish the consular flags, or to discriminate between the persons and property of friends and enemies. A safeguard was however sent him for his protection, to be used only by his countrymen, while a similar paper for the British consul was also enclosed. A note of the same tenor, containing safeguards for the French and Prussian consuls, was sent to the former. These safeguards, it was expressly stated, were to cover no other property than that belonging to the subjects of the different consuls. Any soldier who should force these safeguards, by the rules and articles of war of the United States rendered himself amenable to the punishment of death, and they were therefore to be shown, in case the city should be carried, to all officers and privates of the American army who might approach the residences of the foreign consuls.

The heavy gale having abated its violence on the 17th, advantage was taken to land the heavy guns, ammunition, and such necessaries as were required for the sustenance of the army. By the 18th all the mortars which had reached Sacrificios were safely on shore, together with a number of draught mules and wagons the services of which were much needed. The firing from the city continued upon the lines at intervals, while some of the 13-inch shells from the castle were thrown even beyond the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief. One of the bombs, bursting near a party of prisoners guarded in the extreme rear, caused not a little alarm, yet fortunately no one was injured. Scarcely a night passed without skirmishes either in front or rear, the Mexicans being invariably driven after firing one or two fruitless volleys.

Under cover of the darkness, ground was broken for the trenches on the night of the 18th of March, and before morning, with such energy did the men work, they were to a degree sheltered from the heavy fire which

at daylight was opened upon them. During the 19th and 20th the labor of landing shells and heavy shot was carried on by the navy with untiring zeal, the work in the trenches, although the men were exposed to an almost constant fire from the city and castle, at the same time progressing with rapidity. On the night of the 20th another norther set in, driving many vessels upon the beach. The effects of the gale were also seriously felt on shore; for while the eyes of the soldiers were blinded by the clouds of sand continually beating in their faces, the open trenches were filled almost as fast as all the efforts of the men could clear them. By the afternoon of the following day the storm had however spent its fury, and the morning of the 22d of March came in with calm weather.

The platforms for seven of the 10-inch mortars which had arrived had by this time been laid, the pieces mounted, and a battery for two 8-inch Paixhans and four 24-pounders nearly completed. Forty of the heavy mortars, ordered in November by General Scott and which should have been upon the coast weeks previous to this, were still behind, but in some degree to make up for the want of these pieces an offer made by the navy, now under Commodore Perry as Commodore Conner had been relieved, was promptly responded to by a call for a heavy battery of Paixhans and 32-pounders. Being now in a situation to open upon the city, the American commander, under a white flag, sent in a summons to General Morales to surrender, the bearer of the flag being limited to two hours to return with an answer.

In his summons, after stating that the place was so closely invested by sea and land as to render it impossible for its garrison to receive succor or reinforcements from without, and that batteries had been established competent to its speedy reduction, General Scott next assumed it as due to the courtesies of war and the rights of humanity to summon the commander-in-chief of Vera Cruz to surrender. His anxiety to spare the beautiful city from the imminent hazard of demolition, its gallant defenders from a useless effusion of blood, and its peaceful inhabitants, including women and children, from the inevitable horrors of a triumphant assault, were among the reasons which actuated the American commander, as set forth in his note, to address the intelligence, gallantry and patriotism, no less than the humanity of the governor and commander-in-chief of Vera Cruz. Without being accurately informed whether the city and castle were included in the command of General Morales, or whether each had its own independent commander, General Scott at the same time stated that he might be willing to stipulate that, if the city should, by capitulation, be garrisoned by a part of his troops, no missile should be fired from within the city, or from its bastions or walls, upon the castle, unless the castle should previously fire upon the city.

Such was the substance of the summons. In his reply, which was returned within the two hours specified, Morales, evidently misunderstanding the terms, began by saying that he had informed himself of the contents of the note addressed to him by the American commander, demanding the surrender of Vera Cruz and the castle of Ulua, and in answer stated that the castle, as well as the city, depended upon his authority; and it being his principal duty, in order to prove himself worthy of the confidence placed in him by his Government, to defend both points at all cost, to effect which he counted upon the necessary elements, and would make it good to the last. His adversary could therefore commence his operations of war in the manner he might consider most advantageous.

The sense and almost the language, of both the summons and response, is given above. Nothing could be plainer than the former, where General Scott avoids making a demand for the surrender of the castle. He was not in a situation, with only one-fifth of his heavy ordnance at hand, to make such a demand; but the Mexican general, with more haste and bravery than reflection or sagacity, assumed complete command of both city and castle, and thus, while giving his cool and wily adversary the advantage from the first, with great hardihood in the next breath told him he might commence the bombardment at once.

The Americans opened with seven 10-inch mortars, and soon adding the fire of a number of light cohorns, the play upon the devoted city was incessant. Nor were the Mexicans idle; for every piece that could be brought to bear upon the trenches, from the castle, from Santiago, and from the bastion works within range, were instantly belching forth a storm of missiles. With the firing of the first gun from the American batteries the Musquito fleet under Tatnall, by previous concert with Commodore Perry, was ordered to weigh anchor; and standing in to a point in rear of the lime-kiln, where the vessels were covered from the direct fire of the castle, a heavy cannonade upon the town was soon added. This little fleet consisted of the steamer Spitfire, under Porter, the Vixen, under Sands, with the schooners Bonita, Reefer, Petrel, Falcon and Tampico, commanded in order by Benham, Sterrett, Shaw, Glasson and Griffin, the latter officer bringing his vessel first into action. By elevating their heavy guns over the point of land in front they were enabled to reach Fort Santiago, and the southern quarters of the city, with ease, while at the same time they were only exposed to the flight of shells continually sent upon them from the castle. But even these, although many burst directly over the fleet, caused little injury, and Tatnall was enabled to keep up his fire until dark. The play of the Mexican forts upon the land

batteries had meanwhile been incessant—at every moment the trenches were harassed by the round shot and shell from Santiago and the other works. In point of numbers the loss to the Americans at this quarter was trifling; but Vinton, a gallant and most estimable officer of the 3d artillery, was slain, and several men were killed or wounded at the mortars before the fire of the enemy slackened.

At dark Tatnall hauled off with his little flotilla, taking up his old ground under Sacrificios. The mortar batteries however continued their fire upon the city, and while the shells were seen to fall directly inside the walls, the after explosions, sending up lurid bodies of flame, told with what terrible effect they were carrying out the work of demolition and death. At daylight on the morning of the 23d of March Tatnall again weighed anchor, and the steamers taking the schooners in tow he stood in, with great audacity, until he had reached a point within effective range of Santiago and the southern parts of the city. Here anchoring with springs upon his cables, he re-opened a severe fire upon the town, which was returned with vigor both by the castle and nearest fort. After keeping up a steady cannonade for more than an hour, his heavy shell and round shot crashing into the city at every discharge, Commodore Perry hoisted a signal for Tatnall to return to his old anchorage. He kept up his fire however as he hauled off, and although the enemy was rapidly gaining the range of the fleet, and burst many shells directly among the vessels, the injury sustained was unimportant.

Meanwhile the land batteries were plied with vehemence, the counter fire being maintained briskly during the forenoon by the enemy. By the middle of the day three additional mortars had been planted, and the arrival of a vessel the evening previous, with thirteen of these heavy pieces, inspired the besiegers with new hopes of the speedy reduction of the place. Two of these mortars, with the navy battery of three long 32-pounders and the same number of Paixhans, were promptly landed. But another norther springing up on the afternoon of the 23d, all farther communication with the transports was for the time suspended. The fire from such of the mortars as were in position was continued at intervals, yet not with the same vigor as at first for the want of ammunition.

The communication between the foreign men-of-war, save under the sanction of a flag of truce, had been in the meantime prohibited. Commodore Perry had early suggested this measure to General Scott, and the latter deeming that the uninterrupted intercourse previously maintained would give the beleaguered city moral aid and comfort, at once approved the suggestion. The commander of the American naval forces therefore despatched a note to Matson, De la Puente and Dubut, the respective ranking officers of the British, Spanish and French men-of-war present, notifying them that the intercourse between their vessels and that part of the coast encompassed by the forces of the United States must cease. This communication was dated the 22d of March, and the measure was most rigorously enforced.

While the gale, which re-commenced on the afternoon of the 23d, broke up the communication between the shore and the transports, greater activity than ever prevailed on land. New trenches were dug, the old ones required constant labor to keep them clear of the clouds of sand continually in motion during the norther, while large parties of sailors from the fleet, uniting with heavy details made by Worth and Patterson, were toiling at the work of dragging the heavy guns out to the sand-bag battery which had been constructed to receive them. There was not sufficient ammunition in the trenches to keep the mortars in full play; but the officers in command still had enough to ply the city at intervals, and the burning of a number of houses near the walls, the flames carried to an immense height by the violence of the gale, and lighting up the neighboring domes and turrets, increased the grandeur of the terrible bombardment.

The work of moving out the heavy guns selected from the navy was incredible. The pieces were all mounted on ordinary ship-carriages, their immense weight sinking them deep in the loose sand. The distance to the battery was nearly two miles, every inch of the way leading through sand hills, brushwood, or across the Malibran pond, the mud and water in which was waist deep. Yet during the night all these difficulties were overcome. The low and clumsy wheels of the carriages, however serviceable on the hard and smooth decks of the men-of-war, were almost useless on shore. Long drag ropes were however attached, and soldiers and sailors bending lustily upon them by hundreds, and the latter adding their heaving shouts, the pieces were fairly dragged or ploughed through the sand. To add to the annoyance and labor, the fierce norther was continually beating directly in the faces of the men, blinding them by its violence; yet cheered by their officers, and excited by the hope of adding a powerful agency in the work of reducing the city, the guns were all in battery by the morning of the 24th, and as soon as they could be mounted on the platforms their fire opened. The officer in command was Aulick, who ordering the play of all the pieces to be concentrated upon a strong work near the centre of the city, the effect was at once apparent. The enemy returned the fire with salvos from four or five different forts, demolishing the front of the navy battery, with such skill were their pieces directed. But the Americans, speedily repairing minor damages, continued to send their missiles smashing into the bastion work in front, and with an

aim so close that in two hours' time a breach was made and the fire of the enemy at this point silenced. By 1 o'clock Aulick's cannonade, which up to this time had been incessant, somewhat slackened for the want of ammunition, and in another hour, every shot having been expended, it entirely ceased. At the suggestion of Lee of the engineers, who had remained in the work from the first, the embrasures were now closed with sand-bags, every attempt being promptly made to repair the injuries sustained by the breastworks and traverses. Four men had been slain at the guns, and Lieutenant Baldwin, besides a number of sailors, were more or less severely wounded.

The mortar batteries, although indifferently supplied with bombs, had meantime continued their fire upon the city at intervals, and as the navy battery had drawn the weight of the counter fire of the enemy the loss and damage was comparatively unimportant. A 10-inch mortar, however, struck in the muzzle by a shell from the castle, had been dismounted, while one man had been killed and three or four wounded. In the afternoon Aulick was relieved by Mayo, with a fresh detachment of sailors from the squadron; an additional supply of ammunition was also taken out to the navy battery; and at dark fatigue parties were diligently employed in repairing the injuries the work had sustained.

A sharp skirmish had taken place during the afternoon in the rear of Twiggs's encampment at Vergara. A party of Mexicans having been discovered near the Puente del Medio, a bridge three miles distant on the road to Jalapa, a company of rifles under Roberts was sent out to watch their movements. The enemy were now found to be two or three hundred strong, occupying not only the head of the bridge but a commanding ridge immediately in the rear. This intelligence was sent back; whereupon Twiggs, determined that the Mexicans should be speedily dislodged, despatched Persifer F. Smith, with a large detachment, to the support. On reaching the ground, that officer sent Roberts into the chaparral on the right, while Pope, with two companies, was ordered into the brush on the left, Smith moving directly up the road to the attack. The enemy opened a brisk fire of musketry; but Roberts, having gained a point within good rifle range, sent back such a biting shower of balls that they speedily retired in disorder. The pursuit was continued until dark, the Mexican loss being considerable. On the American side two sergeants and two privates were dangerously wounded.

During the evening of the 24th, a memorial was sent in to General Scott from the city, signed by the English, French, Spanish and Prussian consuls, in which, after drawing attention to the frightful results the bombardment had already caused, they prayed that a truce might be granted of sufficient duration to allow their countrymen, as well as the Mexican women and children, to leave Vera Cruz. The reply of the American commander was prompt, and of a nature redounding to his honor. After regretting the lateness of their application, the consuls were told that the communication between them and the foreign vessels at Sacrificios had been left open up to the 23d of March in order to allow neutrals an opportunity of escaping from the horrors of a siege of which they had received every admonition. A truce could not be granted, except accompanied by a distinct proposition from the Mexican commander to surrender Vera Cruz: in the meantime, the siege would go on with increased means and vigor. To convince the consuls that the unavoidable distresses of the women and children had deeply engaged his sympathies, before a shot or shell had been fired in the direction of the city, General Scott next referred them to his summons of the 22d, directed to his excellency the governor and commander-in-chief of Vera Cruz. Thus ended this correspondence. The foreign consuls had at first underrated the ability of the American commander and had neglected his warning; and now, when they found themselves driven to perilous straits, they also found that he reserved the weight of his humanity for his own men.

During the night of the 24th of March the same ceaseless activity reigned in the American lines. The injuries sustained by the batteries and trenches were repaired; the pieces to garnish the new battery near the cemetery, four 24-pounders and two 8-inch Paixhans, were dragged out and planted; while an increased transportation train, organized through the active exertions of Cross, Irwin, and other officers of the quartermaster's department, was continually employed in carrying out an abundance of round shot and shells to the different works. The mortar batteries were meanwhile kept in play upon the city; and as the fuses had been lengthened every quarter was searched by the heavy bombs. Dense volumes of brilliant flames, lighting up the heavens at times, marked the position of combustible houses or stores which had been reached, and added new terror to a bombardment which was already frightful. And still farther to increase the alarm of the beleaguered inhabitants, the rocket battery under Talcott, run up in the darkness to a point close under Fort Santiago, a flight of these missiles was sent hissing through the air. Hundreds of the non-combatants, taking every small boat which could be procured, launched out upon the water for refuge. Some endeavored to gain the neutral men-of-war lying off Sacrificios; but the line of guard boats established by Commodore Perry forced them back under the guns of the city and castle, thus farther increasing the terror of those who would not take warning in season.

By daylight on the 25th of March, all the batteries repaired and well replenished with ammunition, the bombardment was renewed with increased energy. The responses from the line of Mexican forts, as well as from the castle, were at the same time more vehement than ever, enveloping the navy battery, and the new 24-pounder work near the cemetery, with a deluge of shot and shell. The roar of the heavy ordnance was tremendous, and uniting with the loud bursting of the shells as they exploded on either side, the cannonade seemed incessant. The weight of the enemy's fire from the front of the town, which was less than eight hundred yards distant, was still concentrated on the navy battery; yet two of their works being battered down and silenced as the morning wore, the responses gradually grew fainter from the other forts, and by the middle of the day had almost entirely slackened. But these advantages had not been achieved without loss. Midshipman Shubrick, a promising young officer of the navy, had been killed at his gun, while the casualties among the men in the different works were numerous.

While the bombardment was raging with fury, intelligence had come in that a large mounted force of Mexicans had appeared near Medellin, nine miles in the rear. Harney was sent out to watch them, with a single troop of dragoons and a small force of his men dismounted; and on finding that they were strongly posted at a bridge some distance in advance of the town, and had erected a barricade to strengthen their position, he despatched word to Patterson asking for reinforcements. That officer hurried out with detachments of Tennesseans under Haskell and Campbell, and a section of Taylor's light battery under Judd, and arriving in front of the bridge the plan of attack was at once adopted. Parties of skirmishers were sent into the brush on either flank by Harney, to annoy the enemy and draw their fire, while Judd was ordered up the main road to a position where he could open with advantage. The Mexicans were in considerable force, and occupying ground of great strength, yet the most complete success attended the Americans. After half a dozen well directed shots from Judd's pieces, the final charge was ordered, and dragoons and volunteers rushing boldly up, firing as they ran, the bridge was carried. In an instant the enemy were in full flight towards Medellin; but Harney and Sumner, speedily collecting every mounted trooper, dashed after them in hot haste, cutting down the rearmost of the panic-stricken fugitives at every step. The pursuit continued until darkness came to the aid of the enemy, when Harney recalled his victorious men. In this affair, the most severe of any which took place in the rear of the line of investment, the loss of the Americans was trifling in comparison to that of their opponents, the latter having over fifty slain. Harney had but two men killed out of his mixed command, and nine wounded. Among the latter was Neil, a gallant young officer of the 2d dragoons, who was severely lanced in two places. The warmest encomiums were passed at the time upon Haskell, Cheatham and the Tennesseans, for their impetuosity in charging upon the bridge, and also upon Judd for the daring manner in which he brought his pieces into action.

The cannonade upon the city was continued at intervals during the afternoon, the enemy stammering more and more in their answers. At night the bombardment was still kept up with the same unceasing vigor, while additional mortars were carried out and planted, and every exertion made to increase the fire upon the besieged on the following day. Mayo had been relieved of the command of the navy battery by Breeze, with new men and a fresh supply of ammunition, every injury the sand-bag breastworks had sustained being in the meantime thoroughly repaired. The determination of General Scott was to continue the bombardment and cannonade, with additional means and increased vehemence, for twelve hours longer, when, if no proposals to surrender were received, an assault was to be organized.

A little before daylight on the morning of the 26th of March a norther, more violent than any which had preceded it, sprang up, driving those who had sought the shelter of the water back upon the mole of Vera Cruz. The gale soon increased to such a fury that all operations were suspended. With the full light of day a white flag was despatched, coming out from Fort Santiago and approaching the American lines: General Landero, who had superseded Morales in the command, had been driven to send out proposals to General Scott inviting an honorable accommodation with the garrison.* It being impossible to communicate with the squadron, the American commander, after ordering that all active hostilities should cease, sent out Worth, Pillow and Totten to meet any commissioners Landero might designate, the lime-kiln on the beach being the place selected for the interview. So furiously did the norther rage, and with such violence did the wind and sand beat in the faces of the American officers, that it was with the greatest difficulty they could reach the rendezvous. After a lengthy discussion, during which the terms offered by General Scott were canvassed and a series of articles of capitulation from the Mexican commander were submitted, the commissioners of the latter

* It was reported at the time that Morales, who although unwell declared his intention to continue the defence as long as a gun could be fired, was violently deposed by the inhabitants and garrison, and the command entrusted to Landero, who had expressed his willingness to surrender. Be this as it may, there can be little doubt that Morales was one of the most brave and determined officers in the Mexican service.

desired until the following morning to give their final answer. This being granted, the convention adjourned.

Meanwhile all active operations continued suspended on either side, the men in the trenches however laboring incessantly to keep them clear of the drifts of sand which were ever in motion. Over thirty sail of merchant vessels were driven ashore and wrecked, so violent was the gale, while even the stronger men-of-war dragged their anchors and were only saved by the greatest exertions. During the night of the 26th the gale continued to rage with the same fury, the communication with Sacrificios still completely cut off.

On the morning of the 27th of March the American commissioners again proceeded to the lime-kiln, the only point between the belligerents where a conference could be held. The officers selected on the Mexican side were Colonels Villanueva, Gutierrez and Robles, the latter a distinguished member of the engineer corps. With great difficulty, during the morning, Captain Aulick was landed from the fleet, and that the navy might take a part in the deliberations in relation to the surrender, after the arduous and gallant share it had taken in the siege, that officer was added to the commissioners on the American side.

After a lengthy conference, in which the Mexican commissioners endeavored to obtain the most favorable conditions, the terms originally offered by General Scott, with some slight modifications, were accepted. By these the city of Vera Cruz and castle of San Juan de Ulua, together with their garrisons, were to be surrendered to the army of the United States, the entire Mexican force to march out and lay down its arms on the 29th of March with all the honors of war. The officers were permitted to retain their side arms and private effects, while all grades, as well as the rank and file, were allowed their parole on condition of not serving again until duly exchanged. The flags of the different Mexican forts and stations, when struck, were to be saluted by their own batteries, and immediately after the castle of San Juan, with the forts of Santiago and Concepcion, were to be occupied by the Americans. All the materiel of war, with all the public property of every description in the city, castle and their dependencies, were to belong to the United States, but a clause was admitted by which the armament, not injured in the farther prosecution of the war, might be considered as liable to be restored to the Mexicans by a definitive treaty of peace. Absolute protection was at the same time guaranteed to persons in the city, and to their property, as well as the entire freedom of religious worship and ceremonies of the inhabitants.

Such is the substance of the terms of surrender as ratified by the commissioners on either side, and afterwards approved by the respective commanders. On the 29th of March, in compliance with the terms, the garrison, five thousand strong, marched out and laid down its arms in silence, not a single note of exultation rising from the conquerors. At the same time, after the customary salute, the Mexican flags were struck, when the Americans marching in, possession was taken of both the city and castle. The loud booming of heavy cannon, announcing the raising of new and strange banners upon San Juan de Ulua and the different forts on shore, was now heard coming up both from the squadron and the batteries on land, and thus ended the siege and capture of Vera Cruz.

In his general orders, issued the day after the entrance into the city, General Scott pays the following just tribute to the land forces engaged in the siege:

"The general-in-chief congratulates the army he has the honor personally to command upon this brilliant opening of a new campaign, and tenders, on the part of the United States, immediate thanks to all the corps—regular and volunteer, including a detachment of marines, under Captain Edson—which formed the line of investment and prosecuted the siege to its happy conclusion. The troops have borne the heaviest labors in camp and in trenches without failure or murmur, amidst sand-storms of distressing frequency and violence, skirmishes by day and night, and under the incessant fire of the enemy's heavy batteries of the city and castle. The steadiness and cheerfulness of officers and men, under the circumstances, are worthy of all praise."

General Scott next returns thanks to the division and brigade commanders, and to the chiefs of the engineer, artillery and cavalry corps, who have already been mentioned; to Huger of the ordnance, McRee of the quartermaster's, and Grayson of the commissary's department; to Hitchcock and Munroe, the acting and assistant acting inspectors-general; to Turnbull, the chief of the topographical corps, Lawson, the surgeon-general, and to the members of his personal staff, H. L. Scott, Williams, Scammon and Lay. In conclusion he pays the following high and well-deserved compliment to the navy:

"Thanks higher than those of the general-in-chief have also been earned by the entire home squadron, under the successive orders of Commodores Conner and Perry, for prompt, cheerful, and able assistance from the arrival of the army off this coast. Besides landing troops and supplies and the strict blockade of this port, the smaller vessels, detached by Commodore Perry, under the immediate command of Captain Tatnall, joined for a time in the attack upon the city, at the imminent risk of being sunk by the fire of the castle; and the land battery, number 5—called the naval—which followed numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, served by the army—at the end of two days was exclusively, after being prepared by the engineers and troops of the army, armed, manned and commanded out of the squadron. This battery, in the successive tours of the gallant Captains Aulick and Mayo, proved itself highly effective."

The houses of the city showed evidences on every side of the devastation caused by the American mortar batteries. The streets were blocked up

and encumbered with the ruins of fallen walls, every building containing combustible materials had been consumed, while the churches and palaces, the dwellings of the foreign consuls, as well as the different public edifices, had all shared alike the horrors of the bombardment. The loss of the Mexicans could never be fully ascertained, but unfortunately it fell heaviest on the non-combatants, for numbers of both women and children were known to be slain. The garrison, better protected by bomb-proofs and casemates, sustained but little loss. Few of the soldiers, save those immediately working the guns in front of the city, were exposed to the continuous bombardment the place sustained. The loss of the Americans, with such admirable caution as well as skill did the engineers perform their duties, fell a little short of one hundred in all, killed and wounded. The names of the officers slain, as well as those wounded in the siege, have already been given. To account for the small list of casualties the fact that the Mexicans did not make a single vigorous sortie should be taken into account. Morales undoubtedly anticipated an early assault, for which he was well prepared. But to sally out at night and attempt the destruction of the trenches, or to harass the parties at work in any other way than by a heavy yet comparatively ineffectual fire in the day time from his forts, he either did not think of, or else had not sufficient confidence in his men to attempt.

No estimate can be made of the number and weight of the round shot and shell sent into the American works and intrenchments by the enemy during the siege, but the aggregate must have been immense. From the opening to the close of the bombardment, according to statements made by the ordnance officers, the besiegers threw into the city, from the land batteries, three thousand 10-inch shells, five hundred 24-pound round shot, and two hundred 8-inch howitzer shells, the aggregate weight of which was over three hundred and eighty-five thousand pounds. In the navy battery one thousand 8-inch Paixhan shells and eight hundred 32-pound round shot were expended, while Tatnall's flotilla, during the time it was plying the town, threw in no less than twelve hundred round shot and shell. The entire weight of all the missiles expended during the siege was upwards of four hundred and sixty-three thousand pounds.

Many of the foreign merchants and property holders in the city, annoyed by the losses they had sustained, were at the same time loud in expressing their indignation at the mode of reducing the place. Valuing the safety of their goods, houses and furniture at a higher rate than they did the lives of the besiegers, they would have had the latter attempt the capture by a direct assault, instead of by regular approaches and bombardment. This shows how difficult it is, in conducting warlike operations against cities, to

suit the wishes of aliens domiciled among the enemy, and who at least partially partake of the feelings of hostility against the besiegers entertained by those among whom they dwell. After the surrender of Monterey many foreigners, in criticising General Taylor's operations, spoke of his heavy losses as having arisen from the fact that he made a direct assault upon walls and batteries, instead of bringing up heavy ordnance. At both Vera Cruz and Monterey the American commanders made use of such means and appliances as they had at hand for carrying out the work before them, but neither found favor with strangers. The former city might doubtless have been carried by assault; but as this would have involved the lives of hundreds if not thousands of men, and as General Scott had the means to avoid this outlay of blood, he chose to consult the safety of his own soldiers. After the timely admonition given, it certainly was not his fault if the lives of many women, children and non-combatants, or the more valuable moveable property at least of neutrals, should have been jeopardized.

The point of view chosen by the artist for his sketch or picture of the bombardment of Vera Cruz is from the navy battery, while that work is in active play. In front lies the city, enclosed by walls, with its numerous domes and towers in plain sight. The castle of San Juan de Ulua, lying on the opposite side, is concealed from view; but the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, with some of the vessels of the blockading squadron at anchor out of the range of its heavy guns, are visible. The line of trenches and batteries of the land forces, engaged in the work of reducing the city, were on the right of the navy battery, and could not be introduced into the sketch. The view of Vera Cruz, with its different churches and commanding buildings, gives the reader as correct an idea as could be conveyed by a simple drawing. The reasons which induced the artist to select the navy battery as the point from which to sketch his picture were numerous—among the most important its high and commanding position, the full view of the city obtained, the importance it had in its reduction, and to pay a compliment, well-merited if poor, to the spirited officers and sailors of the American squadron. During the war with Mexico they had few opportunities of signalizing themselves. The enemy had no navy deserving the name at the commencement of hostilities, and the principal duties of the United States squadron—on an exposed coast, subject to frightful hurricanes, and abounding with treacherous shoals and currents—were to blockade the different ports and harbors. But the alacrity and energy with which they came to the assistance of the more fortunate land forces at Vera Cruz, and the gallant support they rendered during the siege, showed that the will to serve their country was not wanting.