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THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
GEORGE GORDON MEADE

VOLUME I



Major-General George Gordon Meade
From the painting by Thomas Hicks.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
GEORGE GORDON MEADE
MAJOR-GENERAL UNITED STATES ARMY

BY
GEORGE MEADE
CAPTAIN AND AIDE-DE-CAMP AND BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL UNITED STATES ARMY

EDITED BY
GEORGE GORDON MEADE

VOLUME I

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1913

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Now that the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg is approaching, and the lesson of that great struggle and the far-reaching effect of its result are to be brought to every mind, it has become a duty to place before the people this life of General Meade.

This work was compiled and written by General Meade's son, Colonel George Meade, and is edited by Colonel Meade's son.

The volumes contain two sets of heretofore unpublished letters written by General Meade to his wife during his absence from home, while actively engaged in the Mexican and Civil Wars, and a narrative of General Meade's life during the periods not covered by his own writings, together with an account of the battle of Gettysburg.

The letters take the form of a diary, and relate his personal experiences, his views on men and affairs, and describe the operations of the army under Generals Taylor and Scott in the Mexican War, and the Army of the Potomac in the Civil War. Such matters as do not bear in any way upon the purpose of this work have been omitted. These letters are from one who was a loving husband, a professional soldier in the highest sense, and a man who never truckled to the public. They are written to a devoted wife, who had a remarkable understanding in all matters, military and personal, that related to him and to whom alone he wrote with perfect freedom.

The narrative opens with his genealogy and early life up to the time of his departure for the Mexican War. Continuing, it takes up his career from the time of his return from the Mexican War until he again leaves for the field in the Civil War, covering his services in the building of light-houses on the Atlantic coast, the Seminole Indian trouble in Florida, and the survey of the Great Lakes. Again, it

carries on the story from the time of his return from the Civil War until his death, describing the part he played during the reconstruction period and the last days of his life. The account of the battle of Gettysburg appears in connection with the Civil War letters, beginning at the time when General Meade was placed in command of the Army of the Potomac.

This work was compiled and written at the time when the petty, jarring interests of the Civil War were having their day, and history was being distorted by unscrupulous military and political aspirants.

Colonel George Meade, the second son of General Meade, was born at Philadelphia, Pa., November 2, 1843. He attended, as a cadet, the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., for two years, and subsequently entered the service as a private in the Eighth Pennsylvania (Militia) Infantry, September, 1862, in which capacity he served during the emergency caused by Lee's invasion of Maryland in 1862. In October, 1862, he received a commission as second lieutenant, Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, "Rush's Lancers," and served with that regiment in the Army of the Potomac, taking part in the Fredericksburg campaign, December, 1862, and in Stoneman's cavalry raid, April and May, 1863. In June, 1863, he was promoted to captain and aide-de-camp, United States Volunteers, on the staff of General Meade, commanding the Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, and served continuously with him as his aide until the death of General Meade on November 6, 1872, with the exception of nine months from April to December, 1870, during which time he served with his regiment in Dakota Territory during an Indian outbreak. He was commissioned first lieutenant United States Army in November, 1865, and captain United States Army in July, 1866, and subsequently was brevetted major United States Army "for gallant and meritorious services at the battle of Gettysburg, Pa.," and lieutenant-colonel United States Army "for gallant and meritorious services in the campaign ending in the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia." On October 1, 1874, he resigned from the

army, entered into business in Philadelphia, Pa., and so remained until his death, February 2, 1897.

Colonel Meade, at the time of his death, had not prepared his account of the battle of Gettysburg beyond the morning of July the 3d, and the narrative of the subsequent events of the battle has been written by the editor, who has also compiled the Gettysburg maps and added the foot-notes, the appendices, the official communications on pages 312, 313, vol. I, and pages 138, 139, 140, 193, 196, 237, 273, vol. II.

G. G. M.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *April*, 1913.

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
GEORGE GORDON MEADE

VOLUME I

PART I

GENEALOGY AND NARRATIVE TO THE MEXICAN WAR LETTERS

1815-1845

GEORGE GORDON MEADE was born on the 31st of December, 1815, in the city of Cadiz, Spain, where his parents, who were citizens of the United States, were temporarily residing.

His ancestors had been residents of the city of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania, in colonial times. The first of whom there is any record was Robert Meade, the great-grandfather of George Gordon Meade. He was born in Ireland, and about the year 1732 we find him living in Philadelphia. He was a shipping and commission merchant, doing a considerable trade with the West Indies, principally with Barbadoes, where he is known to have had relations, and whence he had probably come to Philadelphia. The owner of real estate in and about the city, a prominent member of the small body of Roman Catholics who had settled there, assisting by his means and influence in building in the city the first chapel devoted to his religion, which was the foundation of the present flourishing Church of Saint Joseph, he was generally regarded as a man of standing and importance among his compatriots.

He died in Philadelphia in 1754, upon his return from a voyage to the island of Santa Cruz. His wife had died some years previously. In his will he named three children, Garrett, George, and Catherine, to whom he bequeathed his property, appointing his brother-in-law, George Stritch, of Barbadoes, his executor.

From this will it appears that, besides the property he owned in the Province of Pennsylvania, he had possessions in Barbadoes, and it is presumed that at the time of his death his children were living there. However that may be, it is certain that we find them a few years subsequently living in Philadelphia, the sons forming a firm under the style of "Garrett and George Meade," following the same

mercantile pursuits as their father had followed before them. It is evident, from what has been learned of the character and amount of their business, even in these early days, and from their habits and mode of life as well, that they had inherited an ample patrimony. Carrying on an extensive and lucrative business, they soon took a prominent position among the merchants of the city. They were among the signers of the celebrated Non-Importation Resolutions of 1765, which was the first public declaration in Philadelphia of the growing dissatisfaction at the course of the mother country toward the colonies.

Catherine married in Philadelphia, in 1761, Thomas Fitzsimons, a young Irishman who, by his talents, energy, and patriotism for his adopted country, rose to great eminence in the councils of the nation and of his State.

George married, in 1768, Henrietta Constantia Worsam. She was a daughter of the Honorable Richard Worsam, of His Britannic Majesty's council in the island of Barbadoes, who with his family was sojourning in Philadelphia, where he died in 1766, leaving a widow and three daughters.

About the year 1770, after the death, it is presumed, of Garrett, the elder brother, Thomas Fitzsimons became associated in business with George Meade, the firm being then known as that of "George Meade & Co." This connection lasted for several years, until the pressing public duties of Mr. Fitzsimons compelled him to retire.

Born in Philadelphia in 1741, George Meade lived there all his life, and was throughout that time identified with the progress of the city. The most active period of his career was passed amidst events which are memorable in the history of his country. He early sympathized with the cause of the colonies, and, among other tokens of the substantial support he gave the government, we find his firm, in the trying year of 1780, subscribing the very large sum, for those days, of two thousand pounds toward organizing the Pennsylvania Bank, which was to supply food and clothing to the destitute army of General Washington.

He was attentive to all his duties as a citizen, known for his liberal views, his benevolent and social qualities, his hospitable manners, and his thorough integrity and high sense of honor, which were so marked a feature in his character that he was known in mercantile circles as "Honest George Meade."

He was prominent on all public and social occasions, though it is believed that the only public office he ever held was that of member of the common council in 1789-91. He held, however, many positions of trust and confidence, and was one of the original promoters and vice-president of the institution of First Day (or Sunday) schools, the Rev. Dr. White, afterward Bishop White, being the president. A staunch Roman Catholic, and deeply interested in the welfare of his church, he was mainly instrumental in the building of Saint Mary's Church, of which he was one of the original trustees and a constant attendant, his wife being equally devoted to the Church of England. He and Thomas Fitzsimons were among the original members of the Society of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick, a social organization which existed in Philadelphia between the years 1771 and 1798, organized by native-born Irishmen or their sons, on the rolls of which society were to be found the names of General Washington, General Anthony Wayne, Commodore Barry, the Cadwaladers, Richard Peters, Robert Morris, General William Irvine, General Stephen Moylan, and many others of that day, distinguished in the history of their country.

At the close of the Revolution, and upon the revival of commerce in America, the firm of George Meade & Co. took a high position among the substantial mercantile houses for which Philadelphia was noted. Its vessels were to be found in all foreign ports, and it became the agent for some of the largest houses in London.

George Meade's children were ten in number, five sons and five daughters. Two of the latter married brothers, Thomas and John Ketland, sons of Thomas Ketland, of Birmingham, England, who were engaged in business in Philadelphia for some years after the Revolution. Neither left any descendants. Another of the daughters married William Hustler, also an Englishman, whose descendants now live at Acklam Hall, Middlesborough-on-Tees, Yorkshire, England. The remaining children, with the exception of one son, died in early life and unmarried.

This son was Richard Worsam Meade, the father of the subject of these memoirs. He was born in 1778 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where the family was temporarily residing, having, with many others, removed from Philadelphia upon the occupation of that place by the British army under General Howe.

After a thorough education and careful preliminary training, Richard Worsam Meade entered his father's counting-house, where he

early displayed remarkable talent. Whilst so employed he made, in the interest of his father's house, several voyages to the West Indies. In 1795, when but seventeen years of age, he visited Europe, going out in charge of one of his father's vessels, and on this occasion made an extended tour through England and France, returning to America in 1796. He then again visited the West Indies, this time embarking in a business venture on his own account in the island of Santo Domingo. Although absent for only three years, he yet succeeded, at the early age of twenty-two, by his talents and industry, in achieving an independence, and, returning to Philadelphia in 1800, in the following year married Margaret Coats Butler, a daughter of Anthony Butler, of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and granddaughter of Colonel William Coats, a wealthy and prominent citizen of Philadelphia.

Like his father and grandfather, he was a zealous Roman Catholic and very influential in the church, and also, like his father, he found his wife in the ranks of the Episcopalians.

He had resumed business on his return to Philadelphia, at the same time taking charge of his father's affairs, which, unfortunately, had become seriously complicated. George Meade, the father, who had hitherto been extremely fortunate in his operations, and had amassed what in those days was considered a very handsome fortune, had, with other moneyed men of Philadelphia, entered extensively into the purchase of large tracts of unimproved lands in various parts of the country. He had confidently looked forward to a rapid increase in emigration and an early settlement of these lands, but the large outlay involved in their purchase, together with the failure of certain foreign houses in the crisis of 1796, had caused his financial embarrassment and failure. Every consideration was shown by his creditors to one who had held so high a position in the commercial world. Through the implicit faith in his integrity and confidence in his ability, he had been permitted to continue in sole management of his affairs. Everything of which he was possessed, upon which he could raise money, had been disposed of for the benefit of his creditors, and in this way he had been enabled to pay the greater part of his indebtedness. The breaking down of his health and his increasing age, however, finally compelled him, in 1801, to take advantage of the Bankrupt Act passed in that year, his son, Richard Worsam Meade, being appointed assignee.

Whilst Richard Worsam Meade was acting in this capacity it

became necessary for him, in order to attend to certain transactions growing out of his own affairs, to visit Spain, where he was detained much longer than he had anticipated. Seeing an excellent opportunity of forming advantageous commercial connections in that country, in which a man of capital and energy could greatly benefit himself, and never satisfied unless actively employed, he established a house in the city of Cadiz, and in 1804 was joined there by his wife and their two children.

During this absence in Spain his father's health completely gave way, and after a lingering illness he died in Philadelphia in 1808, and was buried in the family vault in the church-yard of Saint Mary's.

The widow of George Meade, accompanied by her only surviving daughter, a few years after her husband's death visited England. She was a woman of education and high breeding, of strong religious convictions, a devoted wife and affectionate mother. The death of so many of her children, just as they were growing up, was a severe sorrow; but that and the loss of her husband's fortune, and his consequent broken health, were borne by her with exemplary Christian fortitude. The religious principles of her husband, and his active partisanship with the colonies in their early differences with Great Britain, were, it is surmised, the cause of opposition on the part of her father to their earlier marriage; but, although she would, in forming that connection, be compelled to live in America, widely separated from her own immediate family, she was resolute in her decision.

Her letters from England during this visit, which was undertaken with the object of visiting her only surviving sister, whom she had not seen for very many years, are full of the warmest affection for the many friends she had made in America and of pleasant memories of her life in that country. She looked forward with pleasure to her return to Philadelphia; but this, from many causes, was delayed until increasing age and infirmity rendered it impossible, and she died near Edgebarton, Berkshire, England, about 1822, nearly eighty years old.

Richard Worsam Meade remained in Spain for seventeen years, a stay far beyond his original expectations. He was, in 1806, appointed naval agent of the United States for the port of Cadiz. His residence in the country covering the whole period of the Peninsular War, he entered, during the invasion of Spain by the French, into numerous contracts with the Spanish Government involving

large amounts of money and supplies, and in this way contributed materially to the support of the Spanish cause, Spain becoming largely indebted to him for funds and merchandise. Morally, too, his presence in Cadiz, at the critical period of the siege of that place, was recognized as valuable by the Supreme Junta organized for its defence, not only for the supplies that his house was known to be able to furnish, but for his cheering personal presence. In consequence of these services, the Cortes of Spain, assembled in Cadiz in 1811 and 1812, offered to confer upon him the full citizenship of the country, but he publicly declined the offer, stating as his reason that, while he fully appreciated the honor, nothing could induce him to relinquish his position as an American citizen.

The intimate relations existing between Mr. Meade and those in power, the valuable assistance he had rendered, his affability and knowledge of the world, conferred upon him a high social position among all classes of men, both native and foreign. Thus personally attractive and prominent, nothing more was needed but what he possessed in his wife, noted for her beauty and charming manners, to cause his house to be the resort of all that was most cultivated and refined in the society of Cadiz. His large wealth enabled him to surround himself with all that was luxurious; his gallery of paintings, collected at this period under the most favorable circumstances, was well known in after days in Philadelphia for the number of its choice works of art.

His family, during the period over which we have passed, had been increased by six children, the youngest of whom was George Gordon Meade, born in the city of Cadiz on the 31st of December, 1815.

The return of Ferdinand VII to the throne of Spain so complicated and delayed all matters of business, especially such as related to contracts with the various local governments, that Mr. Meade was greatly embarrassed and delayed in obtaining a settlement of his claims. Both he and his wife were most anxious to return to America, where several of the older children were at school. She had already made one voyage to Philadelphia, in 1810, believing that her husband would be able shortly to follow, but, disappointed in this, she had returned to Cadiz in the following year, leaving three of the children behind her.

To add to Mr. Meade's embarrassments at this time, he became involved in certain legal complications arising from administering the

affairs of other persons. It appears that he had been appointed assignee for an insolvent agent of an English firm doing business in Cadiz. In the settlement of its affairs, he, by direction of the proper authority, the Tribunal of Commerce, took certain action which involved him in suits at law with some of the creditors, and through false representations he was arrested and confined in the prison at Santa Catalina, in Cadiz, where he remained for nearly two years, until finally released by a royal order, issued at the urgent demand of the United States minister to Spain.

The inability of Spain to liquidate promptly her indebtedness to Mr. Meade, and the absolute necessity of his remaining in that country to look after his extensive interests, rendered the time of his return to America so uncertain that he finally determined to send in advance to Philadelphia his wife and those of his children who had still remained with them. She sailed in 1817 and duly arrived in Philadelphia, and after her departure Mr. Meade removed to Madrid, where he continued his exertions for the payment of the moneys due him.

In the meantime the treaty of 1819 between the United States and Spain, known as the Treaty of Florida, having been ratified by both governments, all just claims of American citizens then existing against Spain were, by the terms of that treaty, assumed by the United States in exchange for the cession of Florida by Spain. Thus released, Mr. Meade, in 1820, took his departure and joined his family in Philadelphia. But, after a few years' residence in that city, they removed to Washington, so that Mr. Meade, being at the seat of government, could there more advantageously prosecute his claim under the Treaty of Florida, for this claim, through legal technicalities and other impediments, still remained unsettled.

The family now consisted of ten children—seven daughters and three sons—two having been born since the return to the United States. Of these children, George Gordon Meade was the eighth child and second son. A few days after his birth he had been baptized by the curate of the parish of "Nuestra Señora del Rosario" at Cadiz, with the name of George, after his grandfather, his god-mother being Catherine Gordon Prendergast, a daughter of Mr. Jacob Gordon, a Scotchman, long resident with his family in Spain, between whom and the Meades the closest intimacy existed. It was owing to this intimacy that, as a token of the high esteem in which Mr. Meade held Mr. Gordon and all his family, the name of

Gordon was subsequently added to that which his infant son had received at baptism.

When about eight years of age George Gordon Meade was placed at a well-known private school in Philadelphia, kept by William R. White, formerly professor of the ancient classics, at the University of Virginia, and Henry Hood, who graduated with distinction at Trinity College, Dublin. The school was regarded as an excellent one; the pupils were the children of the better class of citizens; and he remained there for about three years, receiving the usual education of boys of his age. He was considered an amiable boy, full of life, but rather disposed to avoid the rough-and-tumble frolics of youths of his age; quick at his lessons, and popular with both teachers and scholars.

On the removal of the family to Washington, George was placed, in 1826, at a boarding-school at Mount Airy, a few miles from Philadelphia, known as the American Classical and Military Lyceum. The principals of the school were M. Constant and A. L. Roumfort, the latter a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point. They were both men of marked ability and were assisted by a corps of excellent instructors. Among those constituting the board of examiners were General Cadwalader, General Bernard, U. S. Engineers; Dr. Chapman, Joseph Hopkinson, Charles J. Ingersoll, Nicholas Biddle, Thomas Camac, and Richard Worsam Meade, the father of George.

The institution was modelled upon West Point, the boys being instructed in the manual of arms and in company drill, and at certain times they performed sentry duty. An "officer of the day" was regularly appointed, whose duty it was to report any breach of discipline, and the report was read aloud after breakfast to the assembled cadets. It was sought to instil a high sense of honor into the performance of these duties.

During young Meade's stay at the school he was instructed in English, French, Latin, Greek, arithmetic, and algebra. He showed the greatest aptitude for the mathematical part of the course of study, but he was commended also by his instructors for general progress in his studies, and as being a youth of promise. He was very popular among his school-mates, and the friendships formed at this early stage of his career lasted in many instances throughout life. The school was the favorite one for the sons of the principal families of Philadelphia, and many pupils came from distant parts of the coun-

try, especially the South. There were there representatives of the Biddles, Willings, Ingersolls, Coxes, Hewsons, and Bories of Philadelphia; of the Middletons, Andrewses, Herberts, Draytons, Duvals, and others, from various States. Some of these he was destined to meet again as fellow-students at West Point, and some, as Edmund Schriver, Henry DuPont, Percival Drayton, and James S. Biddle, in the army or the navy.

Young Meade was still attending this school when intelligence of his father's serious illness was brought to him. Although hastening to Washington as rapidly as the means of travel in those days admitted, he failed to arrive before his father's death, on the 25th of June, 1828.

Mr. Meade's bitter and constant disappointment in the prosecution of his claim under the Treaty of Florida had had much to do with the termination of his career at the comparatively early age of fifty. He had had to contemplate, year after year, the injustice through which the property which he as a private citizen of the United States had accumulated by honest industry, in a life of voluntary exile, had gone into the coffers of the state, never to be recovered, by means of a treaty of which his country had reaped the full benefit in the acquisition of territory. He had had to strive, year after year, unavailingly to obtain the justice never received, and at last, reduced in fortune to what may justly be called poverty, considering the affluence in which he had lived, broken in health and spirits, he succumbed, his death his silent protest against the injustice of his country!

George's mother, thus suddenly deprived of her natural support, and without those means with which she had lived in the greatest luxury for many years, and with several young children, too, for whose support and education it became necessary to provide, was obliged, under the very altered circumstances under which she found herself, to retrench and conform her daily life to stern necessity. As one means of economizing she deemed it prudent to remove George from the academy at Mount Airy at the end of the year already provided for. After accompanying his father's remains to Philadelphia for burial in the family vault at Saint Mary's Church, he resumed his place in the school. At the end of the academic year he returned to Washington and was for a short time a pupil of Salmon P. Chase, the distinguished secretary of the treasury under Mr. Lincoln's administration, who, at the time, was the head

of a school for boys in that city. Upon the breaking up of this school, his mother placed him temporarily at the Mount Hope Institution, a boarding-school in Baltimore, Maryland, of which Professor Frederick Hall, of Middlebury College, Vermont, was principal.

While Mrs. Meade was occupied with the affairs of George and those of the other children she did not neglect the prosecution of her husband's claim. Endowed with a fine mind, peculiarly adapted to business, and having thorough knowledge of her husband's affairs, she battled unflinchingly to secure justice from the government. With unabated ardor and untiring energy, she, for her children's sake, pressed her suit, but her efforts in that direction, as well as those of her children, after her decease, were wholly unsuccessful, and the claim still remains unpaid.

It had been the desire of George's mother to give him a collegiate education, and, as his tastes leaned that way, to let him enter one of the pursuits of civil life, his pronounced preference being for the law. Her altered circumstances, however, would not permit this, and believing, from the aptitude which he had shown for mathematics and from his studious habits, that he would succeed at West Point, and it also having been the wish of his father that he should go there, she determined to apply for an appointment for him. Although she did not intend that he should continue in the profession of arms beyond the period when it is considered honorable to resign, as having performed service equivalent to the education received at the academy, she proposed in this way to secure him a good education, hoping that, by the time he was graduated, her affairs would be brighter, and he would shortly be able to follow his own predilections. His eldest brother, Richard Worsam Meade, had already, in the year 1826, been appointed a midshipman in the navy.

In the meantime George remained at the school at Mount Hope, which he had entered December, 1829, to await the result of his mother's application for an appointment for him as cadet at the Military Academy. During this interval of waiting he seems to have pursued his studies with ardor. During a year he read, in Latin, Cæsar's Commentaries and six of the orations of Cicero; in French, *Télémaque* and Charles XII of Sweden; in mathematics, Colburn's Arithmetic and Algebra, Walker's Geometry, Playfair's Euclid, and Trigonometry in Gummies' Surveying; Goodrich's History of the United States, Hart's Geography, and the greater part of Comstock's Chemistry and Natural Philosophy; which was

doing very well for a lad of fifteen. The principal of the school pronounced him a boy of decided parts, of uncommon quickness of perception and readiness in acquiring knowledge; studious withal, and exceptionally correct in his deportment. This school, as well as the others, he left with the respect and good wishes of the teachers and the affection of his school-mates.

His mother, having failed in her first application for an appointment for her son to the Military Academy at West Point, was successful in her second, and in the summer of 1831 George was appointed by President Andrew Jackson to a cadetship, and entered the institution in September of that year, at the age of fifteen years and eight months. He was quite small in stature at this time, slender and delicate in appearance, and there were friends of his family who thought that he would be unequal to the severe training of the academy.

His course, during the four years of cadet life, though not brilliant, was creditable. He was much better prepared than the average of those who entered the academy, and he at once took a good stand in his class and maintained it. His class on entering numbered ninety-four members, of which only four were younger than himself. Arranged, as they are at first, alphabetically, he came about the middle of the class. Arranged in the order of merit, as they are subsequently, he, at the close of the first year, stood number twenty-one in the class. At the end of the second year, he stood number eighteen in his class, then numbering sixty-one.

His bearing was dignified and manly, his manners affable, his opinions were of weight among the members of the corps, and he was universally liked and respected.

He was naturally studious and found no difficulty in maintaining in his studies the stand which he had taken among his fellow-cadets, but he regarded the military exercises as such mechanical work that this part of the course was very distasteful to him, and his not taking a higher stand is attributed to his lack of interest in the monotonous guard-mounting, drill, and the endless minutiae of routine. After his return from the usual furlough, at the end of the second year of the course, during the two years still remaining before graduation, his desire, which had never ceased, to be permitted to leave the academy and engage in civil pursuits, seemed to grow in strength. The ease with which he mastered his studies and kept up with his class rendered any great exertion on his part unnecessary, and often,

in after life, he referred to this cause, and the dislike for the military duties, as having produced a certain amount of inattention, that told unfavorably upon his general standing before he was graduated from the institution. At the end of the third year he stood number seventeen in his class of sixty. At the end of the fourth and last year he stood number nineteen in his class, then reduced to fifty-six. He was graduated on the 1st of July, 1835, and assigned as brevet second lieutenant to the Third Regiment of Artillery.

Among those of his class who in after years became prominent in military and civil life were George W. Morrell, Henry L. Kendrick, Montgomery Blair, Archibald Campbell, Herman Haupt, Henry M. Naglee, Joseph H. Eaton, Marsena R. Patrick, Thomas B. Arden, and Benjamin S. Roberts.

It is customary to allow the class graduating from West Point a leave of absence for three months before the members are obliged to report for duty to the various posts assigned them. Lieutenant Meade, availing himself of this leave, sought and obtained, after a few days spent in Washington with his mother, employment as an assistant on the survey of the Long Island Railroad, and continued on the work until the end of September. His object in thus passing the time of his leave of absence was, first, to reimburse his mother for the expense of his outfit as an officer of the army, and, secondly, to make such acquaintances and connections as would open to him a future in civil life and enable him to resign from the army. The construction of railroads was at that period assuming importance, and seemed to offer great opportunities to a young man beginning life as a civil engineer. He had, in truth, gone to West Point somewhat against his will, and, as has been mentioned, he had desired to leave the institution and take his chances in some walk of civil life. Moreover, he felt that the routine incident to service in the line of the army was unsuited to him, and it was also feared, and he was duly warned, that his constitution was not sufficiently strong to withstand a tour of duty in the enervating climate of southern Florida, where his regiment was then stationed. As, however, the time approached for him to make his decision, the responsibility of giving up a permanent position weighed so heavily upon him that he resolved on trying an active campaign with his company, then at Tampa Bay.

Fortunately for him, it occurred about this time that his brother-in-law, Commodore Alexander James Dallas, was placed in command

of the West India squadron. By special permission of the war department, Lieutenant Meade was authorized to accept the commodore's invitation to take passage with him and thus join his company at Tampa Bay. On the 8th of October they sailed from Hampton Roads in the flag-ship, the frigate *Constellation*, and after a somewhat stormy passage arrived in the harbor of Gustavia, in the island of Saint Bartholomew. After a few days delightfully spent there the *Constellation* sailed for Saint Thomas, and thence, touching at Santa Cruz, to La Guayra, on the Spanish main. From La Guayra they sailed for Porto Cabello, Curaçoa, and finally cast anchor in the harbor of Havana. The stay at the different places at which the ship had touched had been most agreeably passed in a constant round of official courtesies, balls, dinners, and gayeties.

From Havana they proceeded to Trinidad, where they remained for a short time, and January 6, 1836, found the *Constellation* back again at Havana, where this most interesting and enjoyable cruise came to an end, for it was there that Commodore Dallas heard of the massacre of Major Dade and his command. This was the beginning of the Florida War.

On the day following the receipt of this intelligence Commodore Dallas sailed for Key West, and upon his arrival there detached the marines belonging to his own ship and those of the *Saint Louis*, which sailed in company with him, to reinforce the garrison at Fort Brooke, Tampa Bay, then supposed to be besieged. Lieutenant Meade accompanied this force and so reached his station.

Lieutenant Meade at once entered upon active duty, and in the subsequent operations under General Scott he accompanied the column under Colonel Lindsay. He was not, however, destined to remain in this country long. After a short tour of duty his health gave way, and he became unequal to the efficient discharge of his duties. The hardships of the service in a semi-tropical climate caused him to suffer from repeated attacks of fever, and these, working upon a constitution not thoroughly established at that time, so debilitated him that, in the spring of 1836, he was pronounced, upon surgical examination, unfit to march with the army, which was about entering upon an active campaign against the Indians. A change of climate being advised, he was in April ordered to escort to the North Fork of the Canadian River, Arkansas, a party of Seminoles who had consented to emigrate. Embarking in a small, uncomfortable schooner at Tampa, they went to New Orleans; thence to Little

Rock, Arkansas; thence up the Arkansas River to Fort Smith; and thence to Fort Coffee, where they disembarked and journeyed overland to their final destination. It was with great satisfaction that Lieutenant Meade at last safely turned over to Lieutenant Van Horne, of the Third Infantry, the charge which he had brought so many hundred miles, which had not been made up of the most agreeable travelling companions.

This duty ended, Lieutenant Meade, in obedience to orders, proceeded to Washington and in person reported to the adjutant-general.

He had been promoted in the meantime to a second lieutenancy, his commission bearing date December 31, 1835. His health still preventing his return to his regiment, he was assigned, in July, to duty in the ordnance department, and ordered to report to Watertown Arsenal, Massachusetts; but whilst on duty there, urged by his constant desire of retiring from the army, and influenced by the prospect held out to him of immediate employment in civil life, he, on the 26th of October, 1836, resigned his commission.

In the following month he was appointed an assistant engineer in the construction of the Alabama, Florida, and Georgia Railroad, of which his brother-in-law, Major James D. Graham, was chief engineer, and reported for duty at Pensacola, Florida. He was engaged on this work until April, 1837, when the war department requiring a survey of the mouth of the Sabine River, the boundary-line between the United States and the republic of Texas, instructions were sent to Captain W. H. Chase, of the Corps of Engineers, who was stationed at Pensacola, to select some competent person and despatch him at once to make the survey. Captain Chase selected Mr. Meade, who sailed from Pensacola, Florida, in a small schooner, and after having successfully executed the required service, which was to ascertain the depth of the water on the bar at the mouth of the river, and the degree of navigability of the river for small sea-going vessels, reported the results, according to his instructions, direct to the secretary of war.

Mr. Meade's next employment was as principal assistant-engineer with Captain Andrew Talcott, who had been selected by a special board of engineers to conduct a survey of the delta of the Mississippi, with the view of ascertaining the practicability of improving the navigation of the mouths of the river. Upon this important work a large force of men was employed, divided into two brigades, the

second of which was under the charge of Mr. Meade. His employment, beginning November, 1837, lasted through about six months' hard work in the field, in which operations were conducted with the greatest care and minuteness, when the party returned to the city of New York, where, during the winter of 1838-39, it finished compiling and drawing the maps which were to accompany the report. The valuable services rendered by Mr. Meade toward this work have been referred to by a distinguished brother-officer in the following terms: "My second recollection of him . . . was upon an elaborate survey and investigation at the mouths of the Mississippi River, in which the facts elicited by some original experiments of his, led me, many years after, to a series of investigations which developed the law governing the formation of bars and shoals at the mouth of that river, from which most important consequences have followed for the improvement of navigation and the increase of commerce."

This work closed in February, 1839, and Mr. Meade found himself again in Washington, between which place, Philadelphia, and Schooley's Mountain, New Jersey (at that time a fashionable summer resort), he seemed to pass in a manner suggestive of some attraction to him in those places much more absorbing than their usual resources would suggest. He was able, however, to intermit this occupation sufficiently to accept, in January, 1840, the position of assistant, on the part of the United States, in the astronomical part of the survey for determining and marking the boundary-line between the United States and Texas, whose independence had just been recognized by the United States, and he joined on the Sabine River the commission convened under treaty stipulations for that purpose.

After a great deal of unnecessary delay, caused by differences of opinion between the commissioners on the respective sides, which circumstance was all the more annoying to Mr. Meade, for he deemed the duties which solicited his attention in the North quite as important as those to which he was contributing in the determination of the boundary-line between the United States and Texas, the work was at last satisfactorily completed, and he returned to Washington. There, in August, 1840, he was appointed by the secretary of war civil assistant on the survey of the northeastern boundary-line between the United States and the British Provinces, which survey was then being organized by Major James D. Graham, of the Corps of

Topographical Engineers, the commissioner on the part of the United States.

During these years Mrs. Meade continued to reside in Washington, and in the intervals of this constant change of duty her son had made her house his home. Intelligent, well-educated, vivacious, and fond of society, he was naturally welcomed in all his comings and goings by a large circle of friends. Among those at whose houses he was a constant visitor was the Honorable John Sergeant, a distinguished member of Congress, whose sojourns at the capital were brightened by the presence of his wife and daughters. Mr. Sergeant worthily represented a long line of ancestry, eminent in ability and learning. A profound constitutional lawyer and a leader at the bar in his native city, Philadelphia, often occupying local offices there of trust and honor; representative in the State assembly, president of the State constitutional convention, the almost continuously honored choice of Philadelphia, from the Fourteenth to the Twenty-seventh Congresses inclusive; the representative of the general government on several important foreign missions, the nominee, in 1832, of his party for Vice-President, when Henry Clay was nominated for President, Mr. Sergeant was now occupying what was destined to be his last public position in a long and brilliant national career. His private life was in keeping with his public one. He was a sincere Christian and charitable to a fault. Broad in his views, hospitable, of engaging manners and great conversational powers, his home, bountifully endowed through the reward of his professional labors, was the centre of all that was refined and distinguished.

It was in this atmosphere, and amid these associations, that young Mr. Meade was destined to seek and win his future bride. Between himself and Margaretta, the eldest child of Mr. Sergeant, early sprang up an attachment that was to prove as devoted as they were mutually worthy to inspire it. Margaretta, the constant companion of her venerable father, had received her education under his immediate eye, and had been reared in the refined and brilliant circle that surrounded him. Notwithstanding, however, the depth, and from many points of view, the reasonableness of this attachment between Mr. Meade and Miss Sergeant, the uncertainty attending his permanent occupation, together with the still unsettled condition of his mother's affairs, caused the proposed marriage to be considered with grave deliberation. But Mr. Sergeant's opportuni-

ties had been so great for obtaining a knowledge of the character of his daughter's suitor, and he had become so impressed with his worth, that his deliberations ended with a cordial consent, and he often afterward predicted for the young man a useful and brilliant career.

On the 31st of December, 1840, the marriage of Mr. Meade and Miss Sergeant took place in Philadelphia, at the residence of the bride's parents, amid a brilliant assembly of the friends of both families. He retained his position on the survey of the northeastern boundary-line, his winters, when field work was closed for the season, being spent in Washington, where the office of the commission was established.

Notwithstanding Mr. Meade's efforts to secure permanent civil employment, he found that, without influence, he was unable to obtain it, except on public works, where its tenure was upon the good-will, or perhaps caprice, of the officers in charge. In addition to this, Congress, in a spirit of retrenchment, was proposing to utilize on these works the services of the Corps of Topographical Engineers instead of those of civilians. Feeling now, with increased responsibilities, that his position was very insecure, he determined after due deliberation, and consultation with friends, to re-enter the army, an opportunity now offering itself in an appointment to one of the scientific corps. Through the influence of the Honorable Henry A. Wise, the brilliant and influential member of Congress from Virginia, who had also married a daughter of Mr. Sergeant, Mr. Meade was, on the 19th of May, 1842, appointed by President Tyler a second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, and was continued as an assistant on the survey of the northeastern boundary-line, upon which duty he remained until November, 1843, when, being relieved, he was ordered to report to Major Hartman Bache, of the Topographical Engineers, on duty in the construction of light-houses and in surveys on Delaware Bay, head-quarters in Philadelphia.

This station at Philadelphia was in all respects a most agreeable one to Lieutenant Meade. His duties were of the most congenial kind, and made doubly agreeable by the pleasant relations existing between him and his superior officer. He was for the first time able, through some probable permanence of abode, to have his own house, and in his frequent absences on duty from the city he had at least the satisfaction of knowing that he left wife and children surrounded by kind relations and friends.

He had been for a little over a year and a half in the enjoyment of all these advantages, when, on the 12th of August, 1845, he unexpectedly received orders to repair at once to Aransas Bay, Texas, and report for duty with the military force assembling there.

The complications between the United States and Mexico, growing out of the gaining of her independence by Texas, and her subsequent annexation to the United States, had at this time assumed so serious an aspect that the force which, as a precautionary measure, had been collected at Fort Jessup, Louisiana, under the command of Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, and known as the army of observation, was ordered to proceed to some point on the coast of Texas, convenient, in case of necessity, for advancing to the western frontier of that State. General Taylor had selected Aransas Bay as that point, and had proceeded there early in July, 1845.

It was with no light heart, but with the promptness of a true soldier, that Lieutenant Meade bade farewell to his quiet home and set forth on the second day after receiving his orders, leaving his wife and three little children, one of whom was so ill that he never expected to see him again. But in this trying moment he was nobly supported by his young wife, who thus early in their career evinced that unselfish devotion to his interests and welfare which, throughout life, was to lighten the burden of his ever-increasing responsibilities and support him in the faithful discharge of his important trusts.

Lieutenant Meade was at this time in the thirtieth year of his age. His constitution, greatly strengthened and improved within the ten years which had elapsed since his experience in Florida, was now, comparatively speaking, robust. During that time he had been constantly and actively employed in important service, in which he had always gained the esteem of those with whom he had come in contact. How he bore himself in this new field of activity is clearly seen in the following series of letters, throwing light on his innermost thought and life, written to his devoted wife, and doing their part in attesting what manner of man he was.

PART II

MEXICAN WAR LETTERS

1845-1847

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., *August 15, 1845.*

I trust you have not placed any fond hopes on seeing me come back from this place. I found on my arrival here this morning that there was nothing to be done but to proceed to the destination assigned me. Since leaving Philadelphia the news is more belligerent from Mexico, and though I have not the slightest fear of any hostilities on the part of the Mexicans, yet the existence of such reports renders it a point of honor for me to go. From all I can hear (for besides seeing many people who pretend to know, I have met one gentleman who resides at the very place I am going to,) all agree in pronouncing it as healthy a country as any in the world, and if I can only escape New Orleans, that there will be but little danger afterwards. Of course I shall take every precaution at New Orleans, and leave the city as soon as I possibly can, and I really am in hopes that I shall get safely there and in a short time return to our dear home.

In the meantime keep up your spirits and take care of your health and that of the children. No one can tell how my heart was rent at parting with you; but I believe it is for the best that we should be parted, if I am to go, for the terrible agony I endured at the very sight of you and my dear children, it would be impossible to describe. However, there is no use in fretting over what cannot be helped, and there only remains for us to pray God to protect us and bring us again together in his good pleasure.

I suppose you have to-day seen Mr. Pemberton,¹ who was kind enough to accompany me to New Castle. I found his society most agreeable, as it prevented me from giving way to my pent-up and lacerated feelings, and I felt deeply grateful to him for his kindness.

¹ Israel Pemberton, of Philadelphia, associated, as civil engineer, with Lieutenant Meade, in the survey of the delta of the Mississippi in 1838-39.

We arrived at Baltimore about twelve o'clock, and I went up to the Exchange Hotel and got a bed, and had quite a comfortable sleep till breakfast this morning, at half past seven, after which I got into the cars and came down here. After seeing Salvadora,¹ and afterwards Margaret,¹ I went to the Bureau and reported myself to Colonel Abert. He was very civil to me, gave me some additional articles to take with me, and impressed upon me the necessity of staying as short a time as possible in New Orleans. I then saw Captain Swift, and had some conversation with him, and learned from him that there was no absolute necessity of *very great hurry*. He said I might go down the river if I wanted to, and gave it as his opinion that there would be no trouble there (that is, in Texas), and that the Colonel would recall me as soon as it could possibly be done, as he wanted now officers for other duty. All this is of course consoling, and we must hope for the best. After this I called on the Secretary of War to offer to take despatches. He also was very polite, but had nothing to send by me, although I met in his office a Colonel Rogers from Corpus Christi, Texas, which, if you look on your map, you will find is just below the Aransas Pass. He it was who told me the place was most healthy and delightful as a residence, and gave me some letters to take to his sons there. Upon the whole, I feel better after coming here, and now I shall start with a lighter heart.

Keep up your spirits; all will yet be well, and it may not be long before I will be with you again.

I think now of going by the river route, going from here to Wheeling, and thence to Cincinnati, and from thence to New Orleans, in which case I shall leave here to-morrow morning early, at six o'clock. Write to me at New Orleans, and tell me all about the dear children and mother and all your family. Do not write despondingly, but give me the aid of your cheerfulness to assist me in my trials, and may the Almighty ruler of all things, bless and protect you and the dear children, and in his own time restore me to you.

CINCINNATI, August 21, 1845.

I have progressed far on my long journey, having thus arrived here last night too late to do anything but go to bed. I cannot say that I am any more reconciled to our parting than the first moment I was made aware we had to part.

I will give you now a little account of my journey. I left Wash-

¹ Sisters of Lieutenant Meade.

ington on Friday morning, having received all the kindness and attention possible from Salvadora and her husband. In the cars from Washington I met Major Craig,¹ on his return to Philadelphia, who said he would call and tell you he had met me. At the Relay House I parted with him and got into the cars for Cumberland, where I met Mr. Randall,² who married Miss Wirt, and was in Congress with your father the last session he served. Mr. Randall being a very intelligent gentleman, we sat together and conversed during the whole day, till evening, when we arrived at Cumberland, where he remained. I found his society most agreeable. At Cumberland I took the mail stage for Wheeling, and found myself with but one passenger, a young merchant, from Huntsville, Alabama, returning from Philadelphia, where he had been purchasing goods. On account of his admiration of Philadelphia, he being a sterling Whig, and withal a very intelligent man, I took to him. We arrived at Wheeling at eleven o'clock Sunday night, and finding the water very low, I determined to go overland to this place and depend upon taking the river here. I left Wheeling at six o'clock Monday morning, and reached Zanesville late that night, started early the next morning, travelled all night, and got here about ten last night. I took a bath, went to bed, and had sweet dreams of you and my children. I have found here many acquaintances, mostly of the army; one, Captain Irwin, an old friend, who has been running round the town with me this morning, assisting me in making purchases of articles necessary for my outfit, such as horse equipments, bed and bedding, etc. I very much fear this will be a most ruinously expensive business, and I wish to heaven I was out of it; but it was absolutely necessary to procure these things, and I could get them cheaper here than in New Orleans, besides my intention of spending no longer time than absolutely necessary in that city. I shall leave here to-night or early to-morrow morning for down the river, and may probably spend a day at Louisville, where I understand that Elizabeth³ and her children are staying. I also expect to overtake there a young officer of our corps, on his way to Texas, whom I find by the books at the hotels is just one day ahead of me. I shall then proceed immediately to New Orleans, and if there is not a vessel going soon to this place,

¹ Major Henry K. Craig, of the Ordnance Department.

² Hon. Alexander Randall, Representative from Maryland in the Twenty-seventh Congress.

³ Elizabeth Ingraham, wife of Alfred Ingraham, and sister of Lieutenant Meade.

I will go to some place in the neighborhood of New Orleans known to be healthy, and wait there till one should be ready. At New Orleans I expect to see your dear handwriting, as I am some days behind the mail. I cannot tell you how anxious I am to hear from you, of my dear mother, who I trust is more reconciled to my departure, and of my dear boys, who, alas, are too young to feel it. Give my very best love to dear mother, and tell her I will soon write to her, maybe I will do it before I leave here, but I am in such a whirl of excitement, that I can hardly keep still, and writing makes me most melancholy.

I want you to subscribe for me to the *Tri-weekly National Intelligencer* and the *Weekly Herald*, and have them sent to New Orleans, to the care of Colonel Hunt, Quartermaster U. S. Army. I also want you to get off my bookcase the "Maps of the Stars," published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

LOUISVILLE, KY., August 23, 1845.

I arrived here early this morning, and should have proceeded immediately on, as there were boats going on; but knowing that they were subject to a detention of two or three hours in going through the canal, which is here cut round the falls or ripples of the Ohio, I determined to come on shore and see Elizabeth and her girls, whom I found at a lovely spot on the banks of the river, about three miles below here. She looked and said she was very well, all the children were so, and she was very much gratified at my visit. After staying with her as long as I thought myself justified in doing, I returned, and took a hack with my luggage and drove to the end of the canal, three miles from here, and arrived just in time to see the boat gliding gracefully down stream. I had nothing to do but return to the excellent house where I am now stopping, and wait for the next boat, which will probably leave to-morrow morning. I was exceedingly put out and disappointed.

I am well thus far, and had an agreeable passage of about twenty-four hours from Cincinnati here. After I start from here I shall make every effort to push on. We have dates from New Orleans to the 14th inst.; it was then perfectly healthy. God grant it may continue so. Nothing new in Mexican affairs, which I still think is a mere bubble to induce the offer of mediation from England or France, and thus give them (Mexico) a chance to creep out of an awkward position.

NEW ORLEANS, *Sept. 4, 1845.*

I arrived here to-day about 2 P. M., very well in health and much improved in spirits. The city is as yet perfectly healthy, and I find here a vessel loading for Aransas Bay, which will probably leave to-morrow afternoon; I have therefore a chance of getting out of this pestilential hole unharmed.

I had a tedious, though, on the whole, a pleasant journey here. I wrote you from Louisville, telling you of my missing a steamboat. The next day I got one, and had very good luck till we got to the mouth of the Ohio; there I took the first boat that passed down, and she proved to be one very heavily laden from St. Louis, with a most prudent captain, who lay by every night for fear of snags and getting aground. At first I complained of this as wasting so much time, but in the end I was reconciled, for almost every day we passed some less prudently managed boat, some aground on a bar, others snagged and in a sinking condition, while we met with no accident, but once grounding when opposite Natchez, when we had supposed ourselves beyond all danger and were running at night. Luckily, it was so near Natchez we were enabled to get the ferryboat there, that lighted us, and we continued our journey, after a detention of twelve hours, and reached here safely, as I said before, about 2 P. M. The vessel I go in to-morrow is an excellent one, which has been running as a packet between this and Vera Cruz, and is now in the employ of the Government. The voyage is about three days, and every one represents the situation there as healthy and desirable, so you must cheer up yourself and also dear mother.

There are a great many rumors of war and hostile operations on the part of the Mexicans, but none that are authentic, or to be relied on. I cannot believe as yet the Mexicans are so blind to their true interests as madly to rush into a war with us, especially after they find, as they have done by this time, that we are expecting and preparing for such a contingency. General Taylor¹ will in a few weeks have with him a force amounting to between four and five thousand men, and any number of militia in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and others, only waiting for the call to rush to his assistance. When the Mexicans ascertain this, and that our Government is in earnest, they will deliberate a good deal before they commence active operations, and it appears to be well understood we are to

¹ Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, commander of the American "Army of Occupation," afterward President of the United States.

wait for them to commence. All this I mention to make your mind easy as to my safety. I fear nothing but disease, and I shall have excellent medical attendance, and every care in case I am sick.

NEW ORLEANS, *September 5, 1845.*

The vessel did not sail to-day, as was expected, owing to its raining, which prevented her being loaded, as she is carrying over a quantity of hay, which would have been damaged. She only waits for a few clear hours to take this hay on board, and she will be off, and as the night is fair (now 9 P. M.), I expect this will be done to-morrow, and we will sail during the course of the day. I paid her a visit this morning, and found her a staunch, well-built vessel, what is called an hermaphrodite brig, one of the kind best suited to the navigation of the Gulf, and as she was built for a packet schooner to Vera Cruz, she has excellent accommodation for the cabin. I esteem myself exceedingly fortunate in going in her, as they have been sending the troops in river steamboats, and vessels of a kind entirely unsuited to the weather to be expected, and it is very lucky no accident has yet happened.

I shall have several fellow-passengers to-morrow, one a surgeon in the army, and another a young officer joining his regiment; there are also some citizens going over.

Lieutenant Ringgold, who left a few days before me with despatches for General Taylor, left this morning on his return to Washington, where he will be in a week. Happy fellow, I felt very badly as I saw him going off in the finest spirits! Well, well, who knows? it may not be long before I am in a similar position, though I fear at present view, and from all I can learn, that it will be a prolonged affair, and probably occupy all winter and spring; however, let us hope for the best.

NEW ORLEANS, *September 6, 1845.*

We have had to-day fine, clear weather, the vessel is loaded, and we shall be off in an hour or two (5 P. M.).

I wrote you a long letter last night; this is my last from here, and the next will be from Aransas Bay, and will probably not reach you for ten or twelve days after this. I feel much better to-day than yesterday, when I was fatigued and heated. I believe I am quite well, and look with great gratification upon getting out of this pestilential hole, without disease, or there being any in it.

PARTS OF TEXAS & MEXICO

COVERING
THE SEAT OF THE WAR
IN
MEXICO



Captain Cram, my senior officer, arrived to-day, and accompanies us to Aransas Bay; also Captain Sanders,¹ who married Miss Wilkins, and who is an old friend of mine.

DEPOT ST. JOSEPH'S ISLAND, TEXAS, *September 14, 1845.*

I arrived here two days ago, well, hearty, and in good spirits, having made the most delightful voyage from New Orleans I ever made; not at all sea-sick, pleasant company, cool breezes, and good fare. God be thanked!

If you look on your map you will find the Aransas Pass laid down; I am there, just inside the open sea, on the point of the island to the north. This point is a large depot of provisions, having a bar to enter it, on which is only eight feet of water, consequently all large vessels anchor outside, are lighted by two steamers, and their contents forwarded to Corpus Christi (where is the main army) by two smaller steamers of light draft. I have been for the last two days getting my things ashore here, very much occupied, and am now going to join the army at Corpus Christi, twenty-five miles from here, on the right bank of the river Nueces, immediately at its mouth; so you can follow me.

Captain Cram, my senior officer, goes down with me, also Mr. Wood, the subaltern of our corps, below me. I presume after we get fixed at Corpus Christi, where we shall be to-night, I shall know something of my movements. I never was better in my life, and I can see at a glance that this point and Corpus Christi, of similar formation, are as delightful and as healthy spots as any in the world. It is a pure sand formation, surrounded by salt water and always having a fresh breeze, without mosquitoes, ticks, or any of the annoying vermin of the South. Nothing but the hot sun, from which, if you are shaded, you are cooler than at any place in the North.

A terrible disaster occurred yesterday, which I only mention to guard you against false rumors. The steamer *Dayton*, chartered by the Government in the commencement of the affair, the only one that could be procured, yesterday, on her return from Corpus Christi, where she had been discharged, owing to the arrival here of staunch and good boats to take her place, exploded, killing two officers, Lieutenant Higgins and Lieutenant Berry, of the Fourth Infantry, and some eight or ten men, and badly wounding some three or four other officers, none of whom are dangerously hurt, but badly bruised.

¹ John Sanders, of Philadelphia.

I was not on her, and the boat I am going on has since been examined and pronounced to be in perfect order; so be easy on my account.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *September 18, 1845.*

I wrote you some days ago, from the Depot at St. Joseph's Island, about twenty-five miles from here, where we were landed from the vessel that brought us from New Orleans. The same day we came up here in a steamboat, and arrived at night. The next morning we came on shore, and reported ourselves to General Taylor, whom I found to be a plain, sensible old gentleman, who laughs very much at the excitement in the Northern States on account of his position, and thinks there is not the remotest probability of there being any war. He is said to be very tired of this country, and the duty assigned to him, and it is supposed will return on the arrival of General Worth,¹ who is expected daily, and who will then assume the command.

General Taylor, so says rumor, is a staunch Whig, and opposed *in toto* to the Texas annexation, and therefore does not enter heart and soul into his present duties; all this, however, is mere rumor and is *entre nous*.

Since my arrival we have been fixing ourselves in camp, and preparing for orders, which we have received to-day. We are to start to-morrow early, with an escort of thirty soldiers and two officers, to make a survey of the river Nueces, which empties itself at this point, from the village of San Patricio, down here, a distance of thirty miles. We expect to be absent about two weeks, and all going in boats. Should the weather be fine I have no doubt we shall have a pleasant expedition, but at present it looks very threatening, and we have had showers and squalls for two days past, doubtless the commencement of the equinoctial gale.

I find matters pretty much as I expected here; Colonel Abert's² grand plan *to carry out which*, I was added to the number of officers asked for, is an entire failure, as General Taylor has his own views and plans, and does not intend to trouble himself with those of other people, so that there was no use in my coming, and I might have been of more service at the Tortugas.³ But now that I am here

¹ Brigadier-General William J. Worth, U. S. A.

² Colonel John J. Abert, of the Topographical Engineers.

³ Survey of the Dry Tortugas Islands off the south coast of Florida, in charge of Major Hartman Bache, of the Topographical Engineers, brother-in-law of Lieutenant Meade.

I want to see it out. I find the climate thus far delicious, the sun hot in the middle of the day, but when shaded from it, a fine cool breeze always felt blowing.

The command, consisting of nearly three thousand men, has a very small sick report, and nearly all of them are cases of dysentery, attributable to the water we drink here. The camp is situated on a beautiful shell beach, having a fine surf on it, where we can bathe, and an extensive plain on which the troops are encamped. The only drawbacks are the wood and water. The only wood is what is here called the Mesquite, which is a scrubby little tree, more resembling a brush than a tree, and which is so crooked, rough, and dwarfish, that it can be used for no other purpose than for fire wood, and is very poor for that. The water is obtained by digging holes in the beach, and letting the water percolate into them, when it becomes fresh enough to drink. Of course the supply, both of wood and water, is limited, and the latter so brackish as to induce its moderate use.

Major William Graham,¹ who is here, has been as kind as a brother to me, and took me into his tent and treated me with all possible attention until I was fixed in my own quarters. Captain Alden, who married Miss Coleman, is also here; so is Captain Wag-gaman, Tyler's nephew, who dined with us on that celebrated day; so also is Captain McCall,² who, by-the-bye, is looking very badly, as he had been very sick before he came here, but is recruiting rapidly here; all my acquaintances from Houston are coming down here, and, in fact, I am among all my old associates.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION,
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *October 9, 1845.*

I believe I have never yet given you any account of our expedition up the river Nueces, from which we have returned about a week, and on which we were absent some thirteen days. I do not know that it will interest you, but as this place is, independent of army movements, exceedingly dull, you must prepare yourself to hear a great deal about things which, doubtless, you consider very trifling and insignificant; but to my story:

General Taylor, being desirous of obtaining information concerning the country lying adjacent to the river Nueces, and through

¹ Brother of Major James D. Graham, killed in battle September, 1847, in Mexico.

² George A. McCall—afterward commanded the division known as the "Pennsylvania Reserve" of the Army of the Potomac in the Civil War.

which his army will have to operate, in the event of an advanced movement taking place, ordered a reconnoissance to be made by Captain Cram and party, to be escorted by thirty infantry soldiers, commanded by two officers. We left here early one morning in five Mackinaw boats, and proceeded up a large bay into which the Nueces flows, and went to the head in search of the river. Being totally ignorant of the country, we missed the mouth of the river, and the first night out was spent by some of the gentlemen in their boats; but I was lucky in finding a good place ashore to camp, where, being joined by one of the boats loaded with provisions, I pitched my tent, had a good supper that night, and breakfast next morning. The next day we made another ineffectual attempt to ascend the river, and got into a bayou, which led us into lakes, and then into other bayous, till, finally, we reached a lake having so little water that we could advance no farther. Under these circumstances we encamped for the night, and the next morning early, I was sent out with four men to explore the country around, and ascertain if the river was in our neighborhood. A few miles traveling brought me to the stream which debouched into the bay, about its middle, instead of its head. I returned, set the party on the right road, which obliged us to retrace our steps, and the third day out we encamped on the banks of the Nueces. After getting into the river we had comparatively easy work. We ordinarily arose at daybreak, had breakfast, took down our tents, loaded the boats, and by seven o'clock were *en route*. Then, about one o'clock, we stopped and had a little lunch and at 4 P. M. we stopped for the day, unloaded, and had the camp pitched, and supper ready by sundown. During the day, and after we halted, some of the men would take their muskets and go along the banks, and were always sure to bring us in some wild turkeys, very delicious birds. We saw plenty of deer, but were not fortunate enough to get any venison. Indeed, you would be surprised to learn that the country is very difficult to travel through. It is nearly all prairie, but having a most luxurious growth of long grass, as high as a man almost, which breaks you down in marching through it, so that starting a deer or other animal it is impossible to overtake him unless you are mounted on a horse. The roads, too, through the country, are rendered impassable by a heavy rain; the soil is so soft they become boggy after a few hours, so that traveling, and particularly marching large bodies of men, will be a very difficult operation. It took us some four days to ascend the river, when we arrived at what

was once the town of San Patricio, now entirely in ruins and deserted. This place was settled by almost three hundred Irish emigrants, under the protection of the Mexican Government; but, during the war that devastated this country, it was a prey to both parties, and now there is not one stone standing on another, and no traces of a settlement except some cultivated ground. We stayed at this place two days, and arrived three days afterwards here, at the main camp, in fine health, all of us improved by the trip, except Mr. Wood, our young Topographical Sub, who was obliged to return the second day of the expedition, from illness, but soon recovered here. You may imagine how healthy a place this is, when we have, collected here, nearly four thousand men who have come from all parts of the country, and many from the upper Lakes, nearly all passing through New Orleans, and many detained there, and yet until this time there have been only two or three deaths from disease, though there have been several from accidents, such as blowing up of steamboats, strokes of lightning, drowning, etc. Nearly all have been affected by the diarrhoea consequent upon the change of life and water, but these cases have all been mild, though many of the men are drunken, dissipated fellows who, you would suppose, would be carried off by any disease. We have here a fine breeze blowing constantly, which tempers the ardor of the sun; but at this season the sun begins to lose its powerful effect, and the middle of the day is the most agreeable part of it.

CORPUS CHRISTI, *October 10, 1845.*

I find my position here most agreeable. Already have we performed one most important duty, which, as I have told you, was extremely pleasant; but, since our return, I have been much occupied in making drawings, which, as it has been done under the eyes of all the army, has enabled us to show them that we are not idlers and mere civilians, but that, in anticipation of war, we are the *first employed*, and our duties of a most important nature. We are now told to hold ourselves in readiness to leave at a moment's notice, and make a reconnoissance of the Brazos de Santiago, an arm of the sea, which juts in near the mouth of the Rio Grande, and approaches within twenty miles of the Mexican town of Matamoras, where they have troops and supplies. This, therefore, is not only an important, but an honorable duty, inasmuch as the Mexicans may endeavor to interrupt our labors. We will however go in a steamer from here,

accompanied by one hundred men from the artillery and infantry, and take a field-piece with us to keep off Mexicans. For this duty every one is applying, and we are considered most fortunate in being on it. I have not the remotest idea the Mexicans will dare to oppose us; for, in the first place, all accounts agree in representing their force at Matamoras as contemptible, and again, they know that any act of that kind would be an open act of hostility, and would inevitably bring upon them most severe retribution from our large force and an open invasion of their country; in fact, they know we would like no better chance than some such excuse to pounce upon them, and they are too wide-awake and too conscious of their weakness to give us any such argument on our side. Do not apprehend any trouble therefore. Our duty is peaceful, will be peacefully accomplished, and there is no probability of any hostilities on either side. All the troops have now arrived that are coming here. Captain Ramsay¹ came yesterday. He is looking very well, but he says he left Mrs. Ramsay at Frankford, quite sick, and all alone. I wish you could get out to see her, as you might be of some service to her. He tells me Major Craig is going to live out there, so that you will lose your delightful neighbor. Talking of ladies, puts me in mind we have one in the camp here, the wife of a surgeon. Everybody unites in condemning her coming here, as she is only in the way, and has to live most uncomfortably. She is in a tent, living in the roughest manner, and has not even, I think, a female attendant. I have seen her once or twice. She appears contented and is, comparatively speaking, comfortably fixed; but she is entirely out of place.

October 11, 1845.

The mail will leave early to-morrow morning, by a steamer for New Orleans; so that in twelve days you will receive this. How much I wish I could accompany it. What joy to be once more at the northeast corner of Schuylkill Seventh and Spruce Streets; but, alas, it is useless to be speculating on impossibilities! Here I am, and here I must stay, and the best thing I can do is to be cheerful and contented. My health, thank God, is excellent, and as long as it so continues I shall be reconciled. I would have preferred going with Major Bache; but I should have been much more exposed, and my life in greater danger from disease than now; though the certainty of returning to you, and having an office in Philadelphia,

¹ Captain George D. Ramsay, of the Ordnance Department.

would have reconciled me to all that. I therefore join with the major in our mutual regret at not serving together, for I have found him the most thorough-bred gentleman I ever met. Our intercourse has been of the most delightful character, and I am highly gratified that a year should have passed on duty with him, with so pleasant a conclusion.

I should like to write to mother, but the fact is I am so occupied that I have devoted all my spare time in writing to you. You tell me she has sent you a piece of Thalberg's. I trust you will practice very hard, and bring yourself back to your former exquisite performance. You cannot tell how much I now regret the opportunity I possessed the year I was in Philadelphia of learning Spanish. Its knowledge would now be to me invaluable. Here we are, four thousand strong, talking of invading Mexico, and not a man who can make himself understood to a Mexican, or who could interpret in the event of desiring to obtain information from him. Thus we are obliged to depend upon worthless characters, who, living on the frontier, have picked up a little knowledge of the language, and whose character is such that it becomes a question how far information can be communicated through them. I am asked a hundred times a day to interpret with traders and others, from the supposition that I can converse from my being in the Army Register as born in Spain; and upon one or two occasions I have been able to understand, and make myself understood, from the little I have picked up in my wanderings. How little we appreciate the value of time till, alas, it is gone!

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *October 16, 1845.*

A steamer leaves to-day for New Orleans, requiring some repairs, and gives me an opportunity of writing to you again, sooner than I expected when I last wrote, a few days ago. Nothing has since occurred of much importance, except that, much to my regret, our expedition to the Brazos Santiago has been postponed, owing to the necessity of sending the steamer to New Orleans, which was to have taken us down there. I understand we are now to be employed in making a survey of this bay and the entrances into it, which will be very pleasant duty, but not quite so interesting or so exciting as the other. I still continue pretty well, though I have just had an attack of the very prevalent disease here, of diarrhœa. The water is so bad and the climate so changeable, that almost every man in the camp



is affected with it more or less; but it is very mild in its effect, and easily yields to medical treatment.

I have been very much tempted here to commit extravagances. The Mexicans from the frontier, who come in great numbers to trade, bring with them the most exquisite fabrics, which they call blankets, all made by hand by the females, and of the most beautiful patterns and colors. I have been tempted to get a couple for you, as they would make beautiful piano or table covers; but their cost, varying from ten to fifty dollars, according to the workmanship and variety of colors, has prevented me. When I go away, should I have any spare cash, I may bring some.

If I only preserve my health, and can see a definite limit to my stay, I would be contented; for I am delighted beyond measure with the climate, and am thus far most agreeably surprised in my duties, finding them easier and more agreeable than I had expected. I find they are looked upon in a light more important than I had hoped they would be, for by the main body of the army I had been led to believe we were considered a sort of incubus.

I have found here many of my old fellow-campaigners in Florida, all of whom have met me most warmly, only regretting I had ever left the service at all. This has been exceedingly gratifying to me.

✓ We are here without any news. Everything quiet on the Mexican frontier, and not the slightest prospect of any collision. Our army is occupied in drilling and perfecting its discipline; and, as far as that is concerned, this is a very good movement. Things will remain this way, I presume, till the meeting of Congress, and then, I presume, some definite course of action will be decided upon, and I trust we shall all be out of the country by next summer.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *October 21, 1845.*

The weather has been disagreeably cold and changeable in the last few days, and both the gentlemen of our corps who are here with me have been and are very ill—Captain Cram with a severe attack of dysentery, and Lieutenant Wood with a violent bilious remittent fever. I myself have had a return of the diarrhœa so prevalent here, and all these things combined to make me low-spirited. Do not be frightened about me, but the sight of two gentlemen so sick, with no friendly hand near them, no accommodation of any kind whatever in a flimsy tent, made me feel badly not only for them, but for myself, in anticipation of being similarly situated. Still, I trust I shall

keep well, and if taking care of myself will do so, I am certain of it. Both, I am glad to say, are to-day better, though still very sick, but not in any danger. The health of the army still continues good; there are very few who are really sick, but almost every one you meet is complaining of some little disorder, all trifling things, but still making them uncomfortable and preventing that enjoyment of life which results from vigorous health. Though I should not call the climate bad, I by no means call it good, for it is very changeable, the mid-day sun excessively hot, the nights cold, with very heavy dews; so that you have to be most careful in your clothing, and dress yourself three or four times a day to suit the various temperatures. Then again, when the "Northerers," or winds from the North, blow, the thermometer will fall forty degrees in a few hours, and from having been burned by the sun, you are frozen by the cold air, so that it requires a pretty stout constitution to stand the racket. I have been very much complimented for keeping on my legs, when both of my brother *Topogs* (as they call us) are down. The general impression is they got their sickness on the Nueces expedition; but I know that is a mistake, for I was in excellent health on that expedition, and after I returned.

We have nothing new here. A gentleman arrived in camp to-day who has just returned from Monterey, in Mexico, the other side of the Rio Grande, where he saw Arista, the Mexican general who commands on that frontier, who said there was not the remotest probability of war, that Mexico was utterly unprepared for any such emergency, and utterly powerless and unable to make any preparations. So it seems we are not even to have the consolation of a little glory, but are to remain here rusting in idleness, or rather in drilling and parading. What my occupation will be I cannot say. The sickness of Captain Cram has prevented all the expeditions hitherto planned for us, and I have nearly completed all the drawings of our trip up the Nueces. If I can only keep well, I shall be contented to go anywhere, and do anything; and if I get sick I will try to get out of the country.

October 24, 1845.

Both of our sick gentlemen have been mending since my last. Captain Cram is still confined to his bed, though the doctor thinks him decidedly better. Mr. Wood's fever has been broken, and he has regained strength enough to walk about, and has obtained sick

leave of two months. He will leave in a few days for Kentucky, his home, and return here at the end of his leave if he should be well enough.

The papers from New Orleans bring us the inaugural address of the new President of Mexico, Herrera, in which he gives up the whole affair, says "the usurped territory is occupied by our forces, but that the internal state of Mexico is such that they cannot redress by arms their grievances, to which they must submit, and calls upon the Mexicans to wake from their lethargy, and prepare themselves to resist any *further* invasion of their territory." This is acknowledging they can do nothing, and are ready to negotiate, so I suppose the question of war is settled; but, unfortunately, that will not break up this force here. It will doubtless be kept here till negotiations upon the subject of boundary are brought to a close, and then a certain portion of it will be stationed on the frontier, as settled by treaty, and the rest dispersed over the country at their old stations. In the meantime we, the Topographical Engineers, will be kept here as long as it is kept together, and then ten to one but we are retained to trace the boundary line in conjunction with Mexican officers; so that I have the pleasant prospect of spending a year here, at the least, if not more. Well, if God will only grant me good health, I will not complain. It is very expensive for me, and in that light is objectionable; but I suppose, if I were not here, I should be somewhere else separated from you, and perhaps with you not as advantageously situated as you are now.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *November 3, 1845.*

When I last wrote to you I was not well; indeed, I had been quite unwell, though I was about and in motion. I am glad to say I am now quite well again, having gotten entirely rid of my cold and cough, and I trust, with a little prudence and precaution, to keep well.

We have no news at all, there is a complete stagnation in such matters. The orders have been received from Washington to put the troops in as comfortable winter quarters as can be made, and the only excitement now is, whether this will be done here, or whether we shall be dispersed over the country in places where there is more timber and better water. That the army is not to be recalled this winter is, however, certain; but for what purposes we are kept here, or how long our stay will be, is still indefinite. I trust, however,

you have gotten over your illusions of my sudden return, and that my previous letters will have prepared you for this, for it is no more than I expected.

But I must not be so gloomy; I have a great deal to be thankful for; I have been preserved thus far, and if God will only grant me good health, I can patiently wait His good will for the joyous moment that is to bring me back. Besides, there are many similarly situated with myself; some, I might almost say, even more unfortunately. There is my friend, Captain Alden; I wonder at his apparent calmness and enjoyment of life. His pride will not allow him to leave, when active service is possible; indeed he could not; and in fact, his attachment to his profession is such, that nothing but similar circumstances would induce him to think of it. Yet from conversation I think he feels very much his position. By-the-bye I wish you to call and see Mrs. Alden, and put yourself out to be civil to her, and you may say you do it because I have written to you of the extreme courtesy and kindness of Captain Alden to me. I also want you to try and get out to see Mrs. Ramsay, at Frankford, whose husband is in the tent next me, and his case is harder than mine, for he left his wife ill in bed and was obliged to leave her and his family away from her relatives and their friends, and dependent on strangers for civility and kindness.

There are now here seven officers, all of whom were in Philadelphia when I came away, Major Thomas and Major Randall having reached here a few days ago. The latter gentleman expressed great regret he had not seen you when he called on coming away.

A camp where there is no active service is a dull and stupid place, nothing but drill and parades, and your ears are filled all day with drumming and fifeing. All this is very pretty for such as have never seen it, but fifteen years of such business takes off the edge of novelty.

We are to have in a few days a grand review of the whole army, which will be an interesting sight from the number of men we have. In one point of view, my position is of advantage to me, as it enables me to make the acquaintance of nearly two-thirds the officers of the army, and you would be surprised how many there are highly educated and refined gentlemen among them. I do not believe any army in the world can compare with them in this respect. I have seen nothing like dissipation, except in some very few instances; but there will be black sheep in every flock, and I have been most

gratified to find such a state of high-toned gentlemanly feeling, so much intelligence and refinement, among a body of men the larger proportion of whom have been in the western wilds for years.

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *November 12, 1845.*

I had intended writing you a long letter, but the day before yesterday I received orders to proceed upon an exploration of the Laguna Madre, which is an inside passage from hence to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Being sent as principal engineer upon this occasion, owing to the continued ill-health of Captain Cram, I have had a great deal to do, and have been cheated out of the time I had proposed devoting to writing to you.

We have now some news which gives me a glimmering of hope that I may not be kept here forever. We received a few days ago an official communication from Commodore Connor,¹ informing General Taylor that Mexico had at last consented to negotiate with the United States upon the subject of a boundary. This settles definitely the question of war, and leads me to hope that the whole affair will be settled before the spring, and enable me and many other victims to rejoin our disconsolate wives.

You must excuse the brevity of this epistle, and be contented with the intelligence it brings you, that I am quite well and in excellent spirits at my approaching departure. I shall be absent from here some ten days, so that you may expect an interval of two weeks between this letter and its successor.

CAMP OF CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *December 1, 1845.*

My last letter to you was dated on the 12th ult., just on the eve of my departure on an expedition down the Laguna Madre. I was out some ten days, and since my return have been so much occupied with preparing the drawings and the reports, that I believe I have allowed an opportunity to write you to escape me.

We had very bad weather upon our expedition, and I was much exposed. Upon two separate occasions my tent was blown over my head, and I wet through and through. Indeed, I returned much the worse for my exposure, having become quite bilious and slightly jaundiced. The weather has been extremely cold, and the high winds that constantly prevail here prevent you from getting your tent comfortable. Indeed in all my experience of field service, I

¹ Commodore David Connor, U. S. Navy, commanding the Gulf Squadron.

have never been so comfortless as now. I feel the cold here more than in Maine, because there we had no wind, and plenty of fuel, and could encamp in the woods. Here it is all open beach, where the wind sweeps in gales, day and night, and there is barely wood sufficient for cooking purposes, to be procured. It is a fine climate in summer, when the wind tempers the burning rays of the sun, but now, when the winds are from the north, and cutting cold, it is the most disagreeable and trying I was ever in. I shall consider myself lucky if I can get out of it without rheumatism or some such pleasant remembrance of it.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *December 9, 1845.*

I wrote my last letter to you on the 1st inst. I am sorry to say I have been quite unwell in the meantime, having suffered from a regular attack of jaundice. I have been as yellow as an orange, and although not sick enough to keep my bed, yet I have felt very badly, and have been under the influence of medicine all the time. You cannot imagine the total want of comfort which one is subjected to here. It has been storming and raining incessantly for the last three weeks, and when one is taking medicine it is no very agreeable accompaniment to be sleeping in wet tents.

The worst effect, however, of the disease, was upon my mind. It made me very low-spirited and gloomy, and for some days, combined with the bad weather, rendered me quite miserable. I am, however, now getting over it; all the uncomfortable sensations have left me, and my complexion is gradually clearing. I attribute the attack to my recent exposure on the Laguna Madre, though I have no doubt it has been coming on gradually ever since I left Philadelphia, for the state of mind I was in for some time after leaving home was enough of itself to produce it.

I must now tell you of a very great temptation to which I have been subjected, and am in fact still so. The Medical Director, or Chief Surgeon, here is Doctor Craig,¹ a brother of Major Craig, our neighbor. He has been attending me, and the other day he came to me and said: "I think you had better go out of the country, you are not well, and it may take some time for you to get over this thing. Everything is settled here, and there is confessedly no necessity of your services any longer. I will give you the necessary certificate, and General Taylor will give you a leave in a minute." I thanked

¹ Surgeon Presley H. Craig, of the Medical Department.

him for his good offices, but told him I would prefer trying to get over it here, as I did not like leaving on sickness, unless it were a case of absolute necessity. I made him this answer for these reasons: In the first place, it always operates injuriously against an officer to leave active service on account of sickness; for, even if malicious people do not impute his sickness to a desire to get away, it will certainly militate against him on the score of efficiency, and he will be looked upon as unable to perform hard service. Then again, I inquired of some of the younger medical officers with whom I was intimate, and they frankly told me they did not consider my case one which required change of climate, that I could be cured here as well as elsewhere, although they acknowledged the utter want of comfort and proper means of taking care of the sick might render my recovery longer than if I were in a good house. Then again, General Taylor could only give me leave for two months, and at the end of that time, should I be well, (and I have no doubt I would be,) I would be obliged to return here; so that, using all the despatch practicable, I would not have more than two or three weeks to spend with you, and should have to endure again all the agony of another departure. Finally, I should be obliged to bear all my own expenses from here home and back again, as the Government makes no allowance to officers travelling on leave. This, at the least, would be two hundred dollars out of my pocket, which I did not think myself authorized to spend. Still, you may imagine what a powerful temptation it was. At night, when I thought of seeing you and my dear children, the happiness I should enjoy in once more having you all around me, I would be almost crazy, and determined the next morning I would go and get my leave. Could I have been assured that I would not be obliged to return here, and that they would put me on some other duty, I would go in spite of the expense; but I had no such assurance, and the general impression in the camp seems to be that in the course of two or three months this large force will be broken up and we engineer officers all sent home. All accounts agree in stating the Mexican question, as far as war is concerned, to be settled, and there is no reason to suppose so large a force will be kept here; especially as our relations with Great Britain are assuming so belligerent an aspect. All these things considered, I thought it and still think it best to wait. If I find I do not get over this jaundice, that it is likely to hang on and unfit me for service, of course I will then, as I have told you all along, have no hesitation in

taking a sick leave; but I am very confident there is no apprehension of that kind, and I believe Dr. Craig offered to get me out, more from his kindness of heart, having taken a fancy to me, and seeing there was no particular use in my remaining, and presuming I was very anxious to join you and our dear children. I hope you will not blame me for the course I have taken, and, rest assured, whenever I conceive a change of climate to be necessary, I will not hesitate an instant about going.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *December 17, 1845.*

Since I last wrote the weather has been much more favorable, the sun having actually shone for two days, which it had not done before for six weeks. My jaundice, too, is almost entirely gone, my appetite and spirits returned, and altogether life is another thing to what it was a week ago. I now congratulate myself very much for having refused a sick-leave; for although I was sure I should get well here, yet I did not expect to be restored so soon.

There are a thousand reports in the camp, making the period of our remaining almost any length from one month to a year; but I presume the truth is nothing is known about it, even at Washington, and my own opinion is that it depends entirely on the negotiations with Mexico which are at present being carried on. We will without doubt await the termination of these. Should it be favorable, and the questions at issue be settled, we will be withdrawn; but, should it be unfavorable, I think we will be thrown forward to occupy the line of boundary as claimed by the United States, and take forcible possession of it and let Mexico do what she can. In the first case, I should suppose next spring would be ample time to come to a definite conclusion, and I might therefore look to getting out in April or May; but should the second case occur, there would be no telling how long we might be kept here. As to the Tortugas, I fear there is but little chance of my getting there. I have a letter from Pemberton, of the 16th of November. He says they have been three weeks at the Tortugas, and expect to finish by the middle of this month; and if they have as good luck in favorable weather as they already have experienced, they will finish the whole by May, about the time I hope to get away from here. I have therefore pretty much made up my mind to being absent from you till next summer, and this I shall consider good luck. If I only keep my health I shall be contented, hard as is the separation from you and

my dear children; but then I am a soldier and must take a soldier's fortune.

This will reach you about Christmas time. God bless you all and grant you a Merry Christmas.

December 18, 1845.

This did not go yesterday, as I expected, the steamer from New Orleans, which is at St. Joseph's, having postponed her departure for a day. This will probably reach you more rapidly than my letters usually do, but still not soon enough to be a Christmas gift. It may get there by New Year's, and probably on our wedding day. Only think, five years have elapsed since our fortunes were united!

I suppose you know that, in a camp like this, where we are supposed to be awaiting active service, allusions to wives and children are considered in bad taste, and one who is always talking about his wife is an object of ridicule. General Taylor was telling me, no later than yesterday, of what he considered a fine joke, of a young officer coming to him and frankly saying: "General, my wife keeps writing to me constantly to come home, and really seems very unhappy at my absence. I have come to ask a furlough to visit her." The general said he laughed and told him that, if he granted him permission to be absent on such grounds, he would not have a married officer in camp, as he presumed all wives were unhappy at their husbands' absence, and all wanted them back.

It appears to me strange that there should be so many married officers; I suppose at least two-thirds of the officers here are married. To be sure, under ordinary circumstances, they are pretty well off, as when in garrison, they can always have their families with them. I believe our corps is decidedly the worst for married men, for this kind of work is our only duty, and we are necessarily absent the greater portion of our time; but with the rest of the army it is only on occasions of this kind, when they take the field, and leave their posts, that they are separated from their families. Still, I would not exchange, for neither you nor I could exist at those posts, mostly on the Western frontiers. No, the more I see of our army, the more am I reconciled to the corps I belong to; indeed it is the only one I would be attached to. In a few days I shall be thirty years of age. Only think how old, what a dream has the last ten years been to me since I left West Point, what a waste of energy and time! I tremble sometimes when I think what I might have been,

and remember what I am, when I reflect on what I might have accomplished if I had devoted all my time and energies to one object, an object where my exertions would have told in my advancement; but, alas, it is useless to speculate on what is passed! It is said that the road to Satan's Dominions is paved with good intentions, and I have no doubt many an acre is covered with mine. It is the better part now to make the most of a bad bargain, and put the best face on it.

You never say anything about Willie¹ in your letters. How does he get on at college? I presume he is with you by this time for the Christmas vacation. I have often thought of him while here, on account of his military mania, and should like to have him here for a few weeks, to give him some insight into the pomp and circumstance. Remember me to him and to Spencer,² who, I suppose, is most an M.D. by this time, ready to kill people on the most approved and scientific principles.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *December 25, 1845.*

To-day is Christmas. Need I say how I have longed to be with you, and how my heart has beat with the recollections of former happy Christmas Days! Last night I lay for hours on my rude bed, in my tent, with the cold wind whistling around me, and felt warm and happy, as I related to memory the truly happy Christmas Eves I had spent with you. I thought of last year. Do you recollect what a beautiful, clear night it was, and mother and Mariamne³ and myself going out in a cab and making purchases; how thronged the streets were with crowds of happy faces; what hustle and commotion in each house when the bell was rung; what joyous and merry meetings then were held? And, afterwards, at the Major's⁴ to see the interest with which he was putting aside the various presents for each of his children! Alas, poor fellow, like myself, he has but the recollection of these pleasures to support him now! Here nothing is seen or heard but the regular sound of the drum, sending the men to bed, and the shouts of drunken men in the little town adjoining our camp, which has sprung into existence since the arrival of the

¹ William Sergeant, Mrs. Meade's brother.

² Spencer Sergeant, Mrs. Meade's brother.

³ Mariamne Huger, wife of Thomas B. Huger, U. S. Navy, and sister of Lieutenant Meade.

⁴ Major Bache.

army. Still, I am most thankful to Almighty God for the blessings He has thus far showered upon us; you and my dear children, healthy, comfortable, and happily fixed; me, though separated from you, still in good health and as good spirits as I could be under the circumstances. With ample means to support us, all our wants gratified, blessed with the loveliest children, at once a source of pride and the most perfect happiness, who that reflects on this picture but must say 'tis black ingratitude to complain! And if I have complained, it has been because I was not well, irritable from indisposition, and because I did not reflect, and instead of expatiating on my annoyances, turn over in my mind all the blessings of which I was the recipient.

I wrote you, I believe, in my last letter, that I had quite gotten over my attack of jaundice; indeed it was quite a trifling affair, though I was a funny object to look at and felt much depressed. I have been quite well now, over a week, the weather has cleared up, and I have been riding every day. In addition to which I have had my tent made more comfortable, by lining inside, and having a rough chimney-place constructed, in which I have a little fire that I sit by to read and write. I am now, in fact, very snug, and have really enjoyed myself the last few days. The last mail, too, brought the Message, and the Secretary of War's Report, by which we see there is no probability of leaving here before the negotiations with Mexico are definitely settled. All appear now to have made up their minds to a residence here, at least till June, and though this is a long time, yet it is definite, it has a limit, and is preferable to the annoying state of mind one was in before, when there was a hope of an earlier return, and the probabilities were constantly being discussed and the subject agitated, so that you could not help thinking about it all the time. Now it is settled, and every one is occupied in making himself comfortable, and finding out means of occupation and amusement, and I have no doubt the time will thus soon fly.

December 26.

I am in hopes you will see Captain Alden, who will be able to give you some account of me, as we were often together. He is a most excellent gentleman and officer, very pious withal, but never obtruding his religion on those around him. I was unfortunately absent when he left here, or I should have requested him especially to make you a visit.

My friend, Captain Ramsay, my next door neighbor in the camp, of whom I see a great deal, has been quite under the weather for some days past.

December 27.

I was interrupted last night by the entrance into my tent of several officers, who remained with me, smoking cigars and chatting, until it was too late to resume my letter. It was as well, for this morning I have received yours of the 7th inst., *unsealed*. I suppose it has edified some young post-office clerk on the route, and perhaps, who knows, but it has been copied as a model. I would advise you in the future to look to the sealing of your letters.

I am very glad to find by your letters that you go out sometimes, as you mention having been to Mrs. Hopkinson's and were going to Mrs. Vanderkemp's. I see no earthly reason to prevent your going upon any occasion that presents itself, and particularly to musical parties where you are invited to play. It is your duty to enjoy yourself rationally and in moderation; and by abstaining from the pleasures of refined society, you are as censurable as if you went to the other extreme and gave your whole time and attention to it. So, take my advice and follow my example; make yourself as happy and enjoy yourself as much as you can, consistently with a proper regard for your position. For I readily grant it is unbecoming to see a woman, whose husband is absent, running anywhere and everywhere in search of pleasure, forgetting her self-respect, and making herself the subject of comment. But upon this score I have no fears of you, and I should really be glad to hear, as I have already stated above, of your going out sometimes; and the more agreeably is your time spent, the more contented and happy I shall be here.

January 1, 1846.

I have had rather a stupid day of it for the First of the year. In the morning I was engaged making official complimentary visits to the "big-bugs" of the camp, all of whom had egg-nogg and cake for their visitors; then we had a race, gotten up by the officers for their amusement; and then I dined with a party who endeavored to be as merry as they could be under the circumstances; and, in the evening, I accompanied them to the theatre; for you must know that since our arrival here they have built a theatre and imported a company of strolling actors, who murder tragedy, burlesque

comedy, and render farce into buffoonery, in the most approved style. And now late at night I am jotting down a few thoughts to you.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *January 10, 1846.*

I have no idea we will go to war with England about the Oregon.¹ Both countries have too much at stake to hazard their prosperity for the small strip of land in dispute; but I fear the talk about war will have its influence on the Mexican Government, and the hope of seeing us involved in difficulties will give it an opportunity of prolonging the negotiations, and if a good chance offers, of breaking them off, in the hopes of assistance from England. On the other hand, England will exert all her influence with Mexico to keep off a settlement of her difficulties with us, in order to embarrass us, and render us more ready to compromise upon the Oregon. In other words, England and Mexico will play into each other's hands against us, in the hope that by both pressing us at the same time they will each obtain more favorable terms. This view is confirmed by intelligence received within a few days from Matamoras, on the Mexican frontier, by which we learn that General Paredes (in command of the army destined to operate against Texas), has declared against the existing government, on the ground of its compromising the national honor, in consenting to negotiate with the United States; that he has effected a revolution, and, by the last accounts, was within thirty leagues of the capital, with seven thousand men. Should he succeed in overturning the existing government,² there would be an end to negotiations, and the whole affair will return to the state in which it was three months ago. I have no idea he would declare war, and if he did, it would be a mere paper affair; but it will cause postponements and delays, and our course will without doubt be to take possession of the line of boundary which we had proposed to treat for, and to hold it with our troops till they have the good sense to give us peaceable possession of it. Under all these circumstances I see no probability of this force being broken up, though we may in a short time advance to the Rio Grande.

It may be that things will turn out better, and that a treaty may be made before Paredes succeeds. I trust in heaven it will be so, for I am heartily sick and tired of this country, though I am more com-

¹ The Oregon boundary question.

² Paredes had already overthrown Herrera, having become President of the Mexican Republic, December 29, 1845.

fortable and better off than I have been since my arrival here, but I dislike the state of uncertainty in which everything is, and would prefer being in a place where, though I might have harder work, yet I would have the satisfaction of knowing that after having finished a certain amount of it, I could return.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *January 20, 1846.*

Your letters of the 29th ultimo and 1st instant have come to hand since I last wrote you. I had been in perfect ignorance of the prevalence of the small-pox in Philadelphia, till you informed me, for I never see here a Philadelphia paper. I endeavor to hope from your letters that all danger is over; still, I am and shall continue very anxious till I hear again. I try not to dwell on the risk you have been running, and am sometimes frightened to death when I think what may have happened since you last wrote. I, however, place my trust in that Gracious Providence which has hitherto so wonderfully blessed and protected us.

I received a sweet letter from my dear mother, written on my birthday and our wedding day. It was in a melancholy tone, which drew tears to my eyes. She looks back thirty years, to the day of my birth, when she says she was living in affluence and luxury, and fondly hoped her children would never know want, and then she speaks—but I will quote her own words, for I fear upon this point we have both done her injustice: "Although in my ignorance I was cruel enough to send you to West Point, an act for which I never shall forgive myself, and never cease to regret, I did not dream that you would enter the army, my dear George. It was the moral standing of the Institution, and the education which you could not escape if you remained there, also the intention of your lamented father, who said your mathematical head fitted you for it, that led me to commit the act; but I was not then as wideawake as I am now."

This infernal revolution in Mexico is deranging all plans and destroying all hopes. The accounts from that country are contradictory and vague.

I am much obliged to Captain Alden for reporting me so well and in such good spirits. No doubt in his happiness in the restoration to his wife and in the delightful post he has been assigned to, he saw everything *couleur de rose*.

January 21.

By an accidental delay this letter has not gone when I intended to forward it, and I am better satisfied, as it gives me an opportunity of informing you that I am ordered on another expedition and shall leave here immediately. It will be under the charge of Captain Mansfield, Corps of Engineers, and I shall return to my humble vocation of a sub. Like the former ones, it will also be a marine expedition, the object being to examine the Aransas Bay, a large body of water lying to the north of this place. I believe it is presumed we shall be gone some two weeks; you must therefore not be surprised if you do not hear from me for some time after you get this.

I am of course very glad to have professional occupation, but would have preferred a land expedition, on which I should have had the advantage of being on horseback, the exercise being so beneficial; but I would rather go in boats than be doing nothing.

DEPOT AT ST. JOSEPH'S ISLAND, *January 26, 1846.*

We have reached this point on our expedition. We are about thirty miles from Corpus Christi, and shall leave here immediately, on our way up the coast along the inside passage. We will visit the little towns of Copano, Lamar, La Baca, Linnville, and Matagorda, in succession. You will see most of these places marked on the map I left with you, and thus can trace our route. We are fitted out for a month's expedition, though I trust to be back sooner, and, in fact, the General intimated he would probably have to send for us, as the recent intelligence from Mexico is of an important character. It appears that the revolution under Paredes has made great headway, that Vera Cruz and all the important towns have declared in his favor, and but little confidence is placed in the troops of the City of Mexico, upon which Paredes is marching with a large force. All things look as if the next news would be his having overturned the Government and established himself in power. This must lead to some action on the part of ours, either in the shape of declaration of war, or acts of hostilities, or possessing ourselves of such portion of territory as we deem ourselves entitled to, through Texas.

Even the existing Government, which consented to negotiate with us, has declined to receive Mr. Slidell¹ as a Minister Plenipo-

¹ John Slidell, minister from the United States Government, was sent to the Mexican Government on their consent to "receive a commissioner to settle the

tentiary, though it is willing to receive him as an agent simply. This will demand some action on our part, even if Paredes is unsuccessful; so that all things look like protraction and delay. I have no idea we will ever get a fight out of them; it will be a paper war entirely; but we shall be detained here upon the contingency, and Heaven only knows when they will settle the thing.

MATAGORDA, TEXAS, *February 18, 1846.*

At length I have an opportunity of sending you a few lines to let you know where I am and what I am doing. My last letter to you was of the date of the 26th ultimo, written at St. Joseph's, just on the eve of my departure. Since then we have been knocking about the bays between Corpus Christi and this place, making surveys, and visiting towns, and places where towns are to be.

I am glad to say our expedition has been more agreeable than I anticipated, although we have had as bad weather as we could well have anticipated. Indeed we have experienced a succession of "Northers" and rains, but most fortunately have managed always to reach good quarters just as they made their appearance. I have never experienced more hospitality than has been extended to us by the inhabitants wherever they have had it in their power, and at this place we are quite in clover. This little town has about five hundred people, but they are of a much better class than those you generally meet with, as it is one of the old settlements of the country, and has a great deal of substantial wealth in it. I have, besides, met here several people from Philadelphia, and have been much gratified at being able to talk of the old place. I am writing this letter in the office of Mr. Fisher, a son of Rhodes Fisher, the brother of Coleman, and half-brother of William. Mrs. Fisher resides here with her family, consisting of two daughters, one married to a young lawyer of this place, the other quite a pretty and sweet girl, named Rebecca, unmarried. There are three sons, one of whom has been a great deal in Philadelphia, and was there when we were married. Upon this we had a good joke. When we came here, three of us, all married, we heard so much of the beauty of the young ladies here that we agreed to keep silence and pass ourselves off for young men, and enjoy our few days under the delusion. But most unfortunately

present dispute"; afterward sent as a commissioner by the Confederate States Government, with James M. Mason, to Great Britain and France, and captured on the British steamer *Trent* in 1861.

each one of us found an acquaintance, like Mr. Fisher, who asked me if I was the Mr. Meade who married Miss Sergeant, when of course I had to say, yes, and thus was blown. However, it has served to make all merry at our expense.

Among other people here I found a Dr. Hultner, an excellent musician, especially on the harp, who resided some time in Philadelphia, and had given lessons to many of our acquaintances, and to whom I was drawn from the simple fact of his telling me he had often heard you play, as he used to go to the Bories, where he gave lessons.

We arrived here last night and expect to stay here to-morrow. I send this through the Texas post-office, and trust it will reach you in good time to let you know I am well and am enjoying a little of civilization.

I regret to say that everything looks unfavorable. Paredes has succeeded in his revolution, and now we must either look for war, or delays, and dilly-dallings; for negotiations, and then long parleys, before this question is settled. I hope for a war and a speedy battle, and I think one good fight will settle the business; and, really, after coming so far and staying so long, it would hardly be the thing to come back without some laurels.

ST. JOSEPH'S DEPOT, TEXAS, *February 24, 1846.*

We have just arrived at this place (now 9 P. M.), and as there is a steamer here that will probably leave to-morrow, I avail myself of the opportunity to send you a few lines without waiting for my reaching Corpus Christi, where all your letters are waiting for me. We shall go there to-morrow, and I will write you again as soon as I can. In the meantime I can only tell you I am quite well and have stood my expedition in open boats, now thirty-two days long, much better than I thought at first I would.

The report down here is that the army is in a few days to move from Corpus Christi and take up a position on the left bank of the Rio Grande, opposite Matamoras. It is believed here that this will be effected without any opposition on the part of the Mexicans; in fact, at present they have not the means of making any, as they only have three hundred men at Matamoras. We have received the intelligence of the success of Paredes, and also divers proclamations from him, calling out troops and making grand preparations on paper to reconquer Texas. But all this is believed to be palaver, unless we get into a war with England about Oregon, and then Brit-

ish troops may be sent to assist the Mexicans, and we may have some work. But, unless that occurs, with all the bluster of Paredes I do not believe we will be disturbed in the peaceful possession of the country, this side of the Rio Grande. Our squadron is also ordered to Vera Cruz, and I sincerely trust these movements may induce the Mexicans to come to some understanding, that this question may be settled. Still, it will take time, and now I have no hope of seeing you and my dear children this winter.

I could not in honor leave now, were I permitted to do so, although I could have done so a month ago, when things were in a comparatively quiet state. But now the forward movement of the troops and the refusal to treat with Mr. Slidell place the prospect of active operations within the range of possibility, though I do not think them probable; yet there is enough to force every one in good health to stick by the army, and no one could leave it with reputation. You, I am sure, would not wish me to jeopardize myself, and will I am confident be resigned when you are aware of the circumstances in which I am placed.

Major Craig has arrived at Corpus Christi, and left during my absence, which I regret, as I should have liked him to tell you how he had seen me. I also understand Captain Cram, of our corps, has gone off on sick leave. Thus two out of the three with whom I came here have gone home sick. Lieutenant Wood has not yet returned. So that your delicate-looking husband is not so very inefficient, after all; for, though I say it myself, there is not another officer in the army who has been more occupied and more exposed than myself during the last six months.

My last letter was written to you from Matagorda, where we spent three days most delightfully, having been treated in the kindest manner by the inhabitants.

CAMP AT CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS, *March 2, 1846.*

I reached here yesterday, having been detained two days at St. Joseph's Island by bad weather. We got here about eight o'clock in the evening, and I occupied myself from that time till bedtime reading all your sweet letters and those of my dear mother, which I found here for me.

I find everyone here in a state of excitement incident to our approaching march on the Rio Grande. It appears General Taylor has received positive orders from Washington to march, and he is to

take up a position on the river, immediately opposite Matamoras. The good people of Corpus Christi, who have been living on us as did the flies on the fox in the fable, and who see in our departure the total breaking up of their place, have been making the most gigantic efforts to frighten the General from going, on the plea of there being a very large Mexican force ready to oppose him; but General Taylor is not to be turned in this way from a matter of duty, and he told them if there were fifty thousand Mexicans he would try his best to get there. These reports of Mexican forces, all exaggerated, and most of them coined here, will doubtless find their way into the Northern papers, but you must not mind them, and give credence to nothing but what you get from me. General Taylor is well advised of the movements of the opposite party, and we know that they have no more troops there than they have had all along, except a column of three thousand, under a General Ampudia, who left the city of Mexico the middle of January, and who had not reached San Luis Potosi, half of the distance, by the last accounts, though five weeks had elapsed since he started. This is but slow marching, and does not betray much impatience to drive the d—d Yankees out of the country. It is considered extremely probable that they may reinforce their army on the Rio Grande, and that they will place detached bodies in position on this side; but their object will not be to oppose us, but to demonstrate to the world that they held military occupation of the country when we came there, and were obliged to yield to superior numbers. I do not think they can be so insane as to provoke a war by an act of hostility, and the opinion among all sensible persons here is that our movement will be peaceably effected. Still, every preparation is being made for the reverse contingency, and if they do undertake to oppose us, they will have to fight pretty hard before they can succeed. I mention these things that you may not be disturbed by any of the numerous reports that will doubtless reach you.

March 4.

Not much of importance to add to my letter to-day. The accounts from the Rio Grande are still conflicting, some saying the Mexicans are concentrating to meet us, and others that they have all recrossed the river to get out of our way. My own opinion is still that there is no such good luck for us as a brush with them, and that all will be quietly effected.

Major Graham left to-day, in command of one hundred men, to

escort a train of sixty wagons with provisions, to establish a depot on the route, some forty miles from here, about one-third the whole distance to the river. When he left, the mess to which I belonged was broken up, and I was much complimented by being invited to join General Taylor's mess, and informed I should accompany the General on the march. In fact, I believe the old man has taken something of a fancy to me, and I am considered as being in luck.

Captain Cram left here on sick leave, some weeks before I returned, and Lieutenant Wood has not yet got back from his sick leave. This makes me the senior officer of Topographical Engineers with the army, though there is another one here, Lieutenant Blake, who came here, however, under some special instructions, and is not therefore considered regularly attached, though he accompanies General Worth's brigade, a subordinate position to mine.

March 5.

Everything here is hurry-scurry, preparatory for the march. The orders are out. The dragoons and Major Ringgold's company of artillery move on the eighth (Sunday), and the First, Second and Third Brigades follow on each succeeding day. My position is not yet settled, as I thought it was, as it was intimated to me I would probably accompany the dragoons in the advance. This is very agreeable to me, as my proper position is with the advance party. Should that be the case, I will leave in two days, as they go on the eighth. I will manage to send you a few more lines before I go, and then my next letter will be from the banks of the Rio Grande.

The letters of Lieutenant Meade written between March 5th and April 2d, the army then being settled opposite Matamoras, were never received, having been either lost in the mail or captured by some prowling band of the guerillas who infested the country.

As Lieutenant Meade states in his last letter that came to hand, the advance of General Taylor's army, consisting of the Second Dragoons and Ringgold's Battery, under command of Colonel D. N. Twiggs, Second Dragoons, began its march on the 8th of March for Matamoras, distant one hundred and eighty miles. He was assigned to this command, and was daily on duty with the advance guard, examining for the line of march, selecting and laying out positions for camps, and performing, in a word, the duty of a topographical engineer.

The march was conducted with great regularity, and nothing of moment occurred during it until Colorado Creek was reached, when a few Mexicans appeared, who threatened to open fire in case the troops attempted to cross. They, however, all suddenly disappeared, without firing a shot or in any way attempting to dispute the passage of the stream, which the troops crossed on the same day.

After a delay of a few days at this point, awaiting the arrival of the supply train, General Taylor determined, from information received, to relinquish his intention of marching direct on Matamoras, and to march to Point Isabel, which was intended as a base of supply. Accordingly, on the 23d the column again moved, and, after advancing to within a short distance of Point Isabel and finding that the Mexicans had deserted that place, General Taylor directed the main body of the army upon Matamoras, whilst he continued with his staff and the dragoons to Point Isabel. The army, under the command of General Worth, halted within twelve miles of Matamoras and awaited the return of General Taylor with supplies. On the 22d he made his appearance, and on the following day the army took up the line of march for Matamoras, and appeared opposite that city on the same day.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, April 2, 1846.

This morning your letters of the 11th and 14th ultimo came to hand. With my usual luck in such matters, I did not ascertain till this minute that the mail was to return immediately, and now I have but fifteen minutes to give you the news since the date of my last letter. Nothing, however, has happened, so that much time is not required to detail it. Our position with the Mexicans on the opposite side of the river remains *in statu quo*. They continue to work assiduously, night and day, in putting up batteries all around their town, and to decline all intercourse with us; but they have not yet fired a gun or committed a hostile act, and when General Taylor made a formal demand for the two dragoons whom they made prisoners the day we arrived, they replied in a very civil manner, that, though they considered themselves perfectly justified in making captures, and considered us as invaders of their soil, and enemies, yet, not being disposed to complicate the already numerous questions in dispute between the two governments, they would accede to the demand, and accordingly did give up the men. It is believed this laudable disposition not to complicate affairs will prevent them from

interfering with us, at least until they get instructions from the City of Mexico, which will take two months. In the meantime we shall be so firmly established, and so prepared for them, that they will find it to their advantage to continue their quiet course of conduct.

I have a letter this morning from Palmer,¹ of the 2d of March. They were at Key West, and nearly finished, expecting to be through by this time. The Major² was then to return to Philadelphia, and Captain Graham to take command, to complete some unfinished work that would occupy them till about the middle of May, when all would go home. So, had I been with them, I should be with you in June. Maybe, now, I shall be with you sooner. If so, I shall never regret coming here, as I have been connected with events that will be matters of history, and have been employed on the most important duty the army has been occupied with since the late war. How I have discharged my part I leave to others to say, but I believe I have given satisfaction.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *April 7, 1846.*

I wrote you a few days ago from this place, which at this moment is one of some little interest. Nothing has occurred since I wrote you to bring the two antagonist forces into collision, though various things constantly occur that seem to tend that way, but for the prudence and good sense displayed on both sides. I believe I wrote you of the Mexicans having captured two of our men the day we arrived, and of their subsequently giving them up on General Taylor's demanding them. Unfortunately the good treatment they received, which they communicated to their fellows, induced a great many desertions from our side, and in one night we lost fourteen men, who swam the river; and so serious an evil was it becoming, that the most active measures were taken to prevent it, and in consequence two of our men, who were attempting to swim over, were shot dead in the water by our guards. This, together with the return of one of them, who had been sent over to obtain information, and who gave such dismal accounts of the way in which they were treated, being forced either to enter the Mexican army to fight against us, or else to go to the mines to labor, have caused the desertions since to be much diminished. The men who returned said they had put one of our deserters in prison as a spy, because he spoke Spanish, and

¹ Lieutenant William R. Palmer, of the Topographical Engineers.

² Major Baché.

last night one of our guards, composed of an officer and two men, whilst patrolling the banks of the river came to a boat with four men in it from the other side. The understanding having been distinct that no armed parties would be allowed to cross on either side, and these men being evidently Mexican soldiers, our officer attempted to capture them, but they being on the alert, got into their boat and pushed off, whereupon our people fired on them, and they returned the fire, and the guards on their side fired on ours. There the matter ended, this happening about twelve o'clock last night. But, to-day, a Mexican who came over here said our people had killed one of the men in the boat, and as an act of retaliation they had hung the man in prison, as a spy. As this last individual was a deserter, of course we do not care what they do with him, but we are somewhat surprised that they have taken no notice of our having killed one of their men, unless they conceive us justified, inasmuch as they were on this side.

Our spy informs us they have about three thousand men over there (just our force), but the most miserable beings you can conceive—he says more like monkeys than men—and that one regiment can whip the whole of them. General Ampudia is expected daily with three thousand more, and in the meantime they are putting up works, defensive and offensive batteries, and make a great parade of their troops every afternoon. Still, they do not fire upon us, and they are losing their opportunity daily, for our big guns have arrived, and are placed in battery, and we are prepared to knock their town about their ears as soon as they fire a shot.

My impression still continues that they will not disturb us, though they will make a great show and keep us in a constant state of excitement with the anticipation of an attack. The game is all in their hands. We are ordered to come here and maintain our position, if attacked, but to treat them in the most friendly manner if they are disposed to be friends. They have already told us so many falsehoods that no opinion of their acts is to be gathered from their words. They say we are enemies and must leave, and yet when we stay they do not disturb us. What they will do when their accession of force arrives I do not know, but I believe it will be a bloodless war, and that they will not be brought up to the point of attacking us. In the meantime we can do nothing but await their action.

General Worth has resigned his position in the army, owing to a decision of the President's upon rank, which he conceives operates unjustly on him.

—— said to me the other evening, that if I wanted an order to go home I could get it, though he declined informing me how he had obtained the knowledge of the fact. I told him I had no desire to leave, as long as affairs were in their present condition, and that I was determined to see the thing out at every sacrifice except that of health, and unless I got sick I should remain here until the matter was settled or I was relieved from Washington by another officer being sent. My opinion is that he had no ground for his assertion, because I know General Taylor has said positively he would order no one out. I merely tell you this as a piece of news relating to myself. I am sure you would not have me leave, under existing circumstances.

I was touched to tears with dear Sargie's¹ remembrance of me in his dream. Bless his heart! his image is ever before me, and no language can express the longing desire I have to be with you all. God knows what a struggle it is to deny myself any chance of obtaining so heavenly a gratification, and that there is nothing I would not yield but my honor and reputation, both of which would suffer were I to leave now; for I would only be permitted to retire on the ground that unwilling hearts are turned out of the ranks just before a battle. That is, if I did not want to stay, I had better be away; a conclusion I am sure you would deprecate as much as myself. And what an inheritance to leave my noble boys, that their father left the army just on the point of meeting an enemy! And suppose an action was had, with what face could I answer, when asked if I was there, "No, I left the army a day or two before it occurred." "Did you know it was probable?" "Oh, yes, but I was anxious to see my wife and children, and embraced the first opportunity to get away." Oh, no, this would never do! You would blush as well as myself! I do not mean by this to say I think a collision certain, yet it is possible. Outraged Mexico may yet determine to declare war, in which case of course we should have a battle. But from all that has happened, and their distracted state at the City of Mexico, I do not anticipate any such event, and only allude to its possibility, as one excuse for not accepting ——'s offer to get me ordered away. I have no idea upon what he grounded his authority; but he gratified me very much by saying General Taylor had spoken kindly of me.

We have most delightful weather now. The summer weather has commenced, clear days and nights, with steady sea-breezes. The

¹ John Sergeant Meade, son of Lieutenant Meade.

ground on which we are encamped is a ploughed field, and is not so good for walking as the shell bank of Corpus Christi, but we have abundance of wood at hand, and a fine river of running water at our feet. The country immediately on the banks of the river is beautiful, and fully equal in fertility to the banks of the Mississippi; but the one hundred and seventy miles between Corpus Christi and this point was the most miserable desert, without wood or water, that I ever saw described, and perfectly unfit for the habitation of man, except on the banks of a few little streams we crossed.

As you may well imagine, we are in a good deal of excitement here, and thousands of rumors of the most exaggerated and improbable nature are constantly flying through the camp, some originating with the Mexicans themselves, who send people over here to tell us all sorts of stories of what they are going to do, magnifying their force, and power; others, again, are set afloat by wags in the camp to hoax their friends and see how a story will increase by being transmitted from one to the other. The mischief is that all these reports get into the newspapers, through letter-writers and others, and unless you are on your guard and prepare your people they will be in a constant state of alarm. Therefore do not believe anything. As long as I can handle a pen I shall write you, and *write you the truth*, to the best of my belief and judgment; and if anything happens to me I shall make arrangements for you to hear of it immediately. Do not therefore mistake silence for a misfortune.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *April 13, 1846.*

I wrote you a few lines on the 9th instant. Since then nothing has occurred to interrupt the state of peaceable non-intercourse which existed up to that moment between the Mexicans and ourselves. Yesterday, however, a communication was received by General Taylor from General Ampudia, who arrived at Matamoras the day before with an accession of force and took the command of the Mexican Army. General Ampudia states in his letter that he is instructed by his Government to summon General Taylor to retire with his forces beyond the river Nueces (that is to say go back one hundred and seventy miles, from whence we came), and that if he failed to commence the movement within twenty-four hours, war would be the inevitable result. Of course General Taylor replied he had no discretion in the matter. He was ordered here by his Government, in a peaceable manner, and here he should remain, let the

consequences be what they may. He called upon General Ampudia to weigh well the responsibility he would assume in involving his country in a war with the United States; that he himself had but one course to pursue, to obey his orders, and must not be held responsible for the acts of his Government. What will be the end I cannot say, but they have so often warned and summoned and threatened to fire, that I am inclined to believe it is another case of braggadocio. However, we are prepared for the worst, and should they undertake to drive us away they will soon find out their mistake.

You know I have promised to tell you the truth as it occurs, deeming it the safest plan to prevent you from being unnecessarily alarmed. For my part I shall not believe there will be war till the first gun is fired; the consequences are too momentous to the Mexicans to enter upon it lightly.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *April 15, 1846.*

The General has received most important intelligence from the other side, to the effect that yesterday an express had arrived from the City of Mexico, bringing orders for General Arista to supersede General Ampudia in command, and that all operations against us were to cease till the 1st of June. This intelligence was given to the General by a Mexican who left Matamoras last night and swam the river above our camp, and who says he obtained it from the courier himself on his way into town. They, however, tell us so many lies, and employ so many and such ingenious devices to deceive us, that the General will not allow any information to deter him from making the most vigorous efforts to place himself in the strongest possible position, and as he has the official declaration of the commanding general on the other side, that war would be the consequence of his not leaving here in twenty-four hours, he is determined to take such measures as will let them know he is serious in his determination to remain here.

He has in consequence ordered the blockade of the mouth of the river, up which they derive their supplies, and also given direction to the naval commander at the Brazos, to examine all vessels bound for this place, and capture such as have on board provisions or munitions of war. So that the good people of Matamoras, who are dependent on New Orleans for their flour, will find in a short time there are two parties to this business, and as they have a large force of

Mexican troops quartered on them, provisions will very soon be scarce among them.

My own impression is that the information received this morning is authentic, for this reason: we have received New Orleans dates to the 6th instant, and they state that the Mexican Government, having refused to receive Mr. Slidell in the capacity in which he was accredited, he had demanded and received his passports, but that some days had elapsed without his arrival at Vera Cruz, and the inference was that the intelligence by the *Cambria* (which was so pacific), having reached Mexico in the meantime, either Mr. Slidell had based upon it expectation of being received, or the Mexican Government had sent after him for the purpose of receiving him. Now, when you join the news with what we have received this morning, it looks very much as if the Mexicans had received him and fixed this period (June 1st) for the termination of the negotiations. At any rate, the immediate battle that has been anticipated by a great many in the camp, has passed away, and every one now thinks there will be no immediate collision. This is the impression I have entertained all along, and have written you to that effect, but we have been in a great deal of excitement, and when "the peremptory and official summons, authorized by the Government, to leave here in twenty-four hours or war would ensue," was received in camp, most of us began to think that talking was at an end and action was to take its place. I, however, had access to the document, and perceived from its tenor, the words being, "if you fail (that is, to leave), war is inevitable," that the construction might be put upon it, "shall report your non-compliance to my Government and the declaration of war on its part *is then* inevitable." I knew that the Mexican Congress was about meeting, and that the President in that country has no more power to declare war than our President has, and that they have told us since the withdrawal of Almonte,¹ now eighteen months, that annexation would be a declaration of war on our part, and yet they have done nothing. All these considerations, in addition to a knowledge on their side of the consequences of war to them, has induced me all along to believe that they would not enter into a war as a deliberate act. I did at one time apprehend, and should not now be surprised at such a result, that if they collected on this frontier a larger force than ours (and in a few days

¹General Almonte, Mexican minister at Washington, was withdrawn in March, 1845.

they will have seven thousand men to our three thousand), some aspiring and ambitious general might bring on a collision, with the hopes of succeeding, and thus advancing his own interests; but I do not believe it will be the act of the Government, and we are so well prepared for them now, and have shown ourselves so fearless of the consequences, that I am inclined to believe their general will reflect a little before they undertake so hazardous an operation. For, if you understand our position, we are like men who have crossed a river and destroyed the bridges behind them, thus cutting off their own retreat and feeling conscious that every exertion must be made to sustain themselves. This feeling pervades here all ranks of the army, that our only hope either for existence or for reputation (for were we to succumb to ten times our number we would be disgraced forever, after all the contempt that has been heaped upon our enemy), consists in a complete victory on our part; and should the Mexicans be foolhardy enough to advance, I believe their only chance of success would be in our total annihilation; for as long as any of our people remained alive the battle would be carried on. We have placed ourselves in so strong a position, and have such superiority in artillery, that it is impossible for them with any force to drive us from here; in addition to which we have a battery of heavy guns (four eighteen-pounders), erected so as to batter their town, and at the first gun we shall rattle them about their ears in such a manner as will soon silence their fire.

I presume you will get my various laconic epistles all in a bunch. I wrote hurriedly every time I could ascertain anybody was going down to Point Isabel.

I make the sketch underneath, that you may understand the various names I use. From Corpus Christi, or rather Saint Joseph's, down, there is an island called Padre Island, some one hundred and six miles long, and about two miles wide, which forms inside, with the mainland, the Laguna Madre (which you recollect I was sent last winter to explore). At the foot of this island there is a large bay called the Brazos de Santiago, being at the end of the Laguna Madre. Into this bay there is a passage called the Barre de Santiago, where vessels of nine feet draught can pass, and then six feet of water can be taken up to a point of the mainland, called Point Isabel, upon which there is a small village called El Frontone, from which it is twenty-seven miles overland to our camp, opposite Matamoras.

My sketch is very rough, but it will serve to clear away much

confusion arising from an ignorance of the position of places, and will serve to illustrate many of the reports you will see in the papers. You perceive our depot is at Point Isabel, where our supplies are landed in vessels from New Orleans; then they have to be brought up twenty-seven miles to our camp. This is our only weak point, because General Taylor's force is so small (at present only twenty-five hundred bayonets), that he is obliged to weaken himself to defend Point Isabel all the time, and in addition has to send an escort each time the train of two hundred wagons goes down to get provisions for men and beasts, and ammunition. Thus you perceive, if the enemy are in large force they can cut off our supplies, and a successful enterprise against Point Isabel, where we have only two hundred men, would be most disastrous to us. Therefore I have been under the impression that, instead of attacking us at this point, if they have a general worth a sixpence he will attack Point Isabel, help himself to our provisions, forage, and money-chest, and then establish himself in our rear and oblige us to cut our way through him to get our pork and beans. But we are pretty well provided against this contingency. We have nearly a month's supply on hand, and each train increases it. In a month, if they should succeed in any such enterprise, we have plenty of men who could make their way to New Orleans, report the fact, and bring back reinforcements sufficient to drive them not only back across the river, but far into the interior of their own country. But they have no such ideas, although they have a larger force now than we have. Instead of offensive operations, they are working night and day putting up defences for their town, as if they expected us to come right over as soon as the first gun was fired, and evidently showing they hold us in very high estimation.

I hope you will not tire with this long military account of matters, but, as I presume we poor devils will be heroes in the papers for some time, I have written it to you *that you may be well posted up*, as the saying is.

CAMP NEAR MATAMORAS, April 19, 1846.

I think I informed you of the report that General Ampudia had been superseded in command by General Arista, and that orders were said to be given not to fire upon us. This report has not been confirmed in any authentic shape, but all accounts agree in saying Arista is to come here, and the last two days we hear Ampudia has

actually left Matamoras, probably in disgust at being superseded. This Arista is one of the most powerful men in the Northern Departments of Mexico. He has more at heart the real good and welfare of the people than any other of their leaders, and is in consequence universally beloved, and can command all the resources of the country. Whilst we were at Corpus Christi, he always expressed himself to a correspondent he had there, most favorably disposed towards the United States, and most anxious to avoid a war, and to compromise the difficulties existing between the two countries. On first hearing of his appointment I was inclined to believe it was done to avoid a collision, but the mail of to-night brings the intelligence of the withdrawal of Mr. Slidell from Mexico, and the refusal of the Government to receive him. I now think Arista has been appointed with a view to calling out the rancheros, or national militia, and the object of Paredes in placing him at the head of the army is to unite the people in the impending struggle, which he now sees is inevitable. Arista was in command of the troops on the accession of Paredes, but resigned, in consequence of his opposition to the manner in which Paredes acquired his power; and recently, we understood Arista was preparing to revolutionize the Northern provinces, with a view to creating an independent confederacy. He is also said to be the firm friend of Santa Anna,¹ who is preparing to return to Mexico from his exile at the Havana. All these things render it difficult to say what his course will be on his arrival; but I am inclined to believe if he does accept the command, and finds war inevitable, that he will do all he can to unite his countrymen against our further encroachment. I continue in my impression that they will not commence the war, but I now fear, from the withdrawal of Mr. Slidell, and the President's war message, that it is Mr. Polk's² intention to force Mexico to terms, and that *we* shall commence the game. Indeed, I look now every mail for a large accession to our force, with orders to commence offensive operations; but upon this point you will be earlier informed than myself.

No open acts of hostility have as yet been committed against us, though one or two things have happened which would give us ample cause to act, were we disposed or instructed to do so. One of them occurred some days ago, but I accidentally omitted to mention it in

¹ General Santa Anna had been President of the Mexican Republic from 1843 to 1845, when, being deposed by Herrera, he embarked for Havana.

² James K. Polk, President of the United States.

my last. This was the mysterious disappearance of Colonel Cross, the Quartermaster-General of our little force. About the 15th instant the Colonel went out to ride in the morning, and did not return at night—in fact, has not been heard of since. Immediate search was made for him, and parties sent out in all directions to scour the country and if possible ascertain his fate. Contradictory reports were brought in, but it was generally believed he was taken prisoner by a party of armed Mexicans, who were ascertained to have been on this side the day of his disappearance. Under this impression, General Taylor addressed a letter to General Ampudia, asking him, as an act of humanity, and to relieve the anxiety of his family, to inform him if he knew anything of his fate. General Ampudia replied he knew nothing of him, that had he been taken by any of the soldiers under his command, or any of his authorized agents, he would have been considered a prisoner of war and treated as such, but that he had not been captured, and was not to his knowledge on the other side. The fear now is either that he was assassinated, for the purpose of robbing his person or stealing his horse, or else that he was carried into the interior of Mexico without the knowledge of Ampudia. There are persons who say they saw him crossing the river in charge of a well-known officer of the Mexican Armed Revenue police; others again, that shots were heard just after he was last seen; others, that his horse has been sold in Matamoras; and a thousand contradictory statements have been made concerning him. What gives color to the idea of his murder is the fact that one of the Mexican officers, who brought a letter over to the General when we first arrived, remarked, on seeing several of our officers riding out without arms, that it was very imprudent and unsafe, for the lower orders of population were most villainous fellows, who would cut your throat for the coat on your back, and advised all officers when riding, to go armed. All of us have felt very badly about Colonel Cross, and every effort has been made in vain to ascertain his fate. He was the father of the pretty Miss Cross who used to be in Washington, if you recollect, and two of his sons went to college with Spencer.¹ One of them is here now (his father's clerk), and is, as you may well imagine, in a most distressed state of mind. He, however, clings to the hope that his father is still alive on the other side; but the general impression is that his life has been sacrificed, and that the disavowal of any agency in the matter on the part of the authorities on the other side

¹ Spencer Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade.

prevents General Taylor from taking any steps other than he has taken. So great, however, was the feeling, that an officer, of the name of Deas,¹ from South Carolina (whose family resided some years in Philadelphia), a rather eccentric fellow, undertook of his own authority to ascertain the fact, of whether or not he was in Matamoras, and without any permission or authority from General Taylor, or even informing him of the step he was going to take, deliberately swam the river a few nights ago, and went into the town. He was, of course, made prisoner by the first sentinel he came across, and is now detained over there a prisoner of war. The manner in which he left, being entirely voluntary and without permission, prevents General Taylor from demanding his release.

Now I believe you have all the news up to this date. The Mexicans have remained perfectly quiet since their summons, Colonel Cross has disappeared, and Mr. Deas made himself a prisoner, and the impression is general now, that they will not disturb us; but all look anxiously to the United States for an accession of force and instructions to march into the country and take possession of the Northern provinces until Mexico is willing to come to terms, at the same time blockading her coast and battering her towns.

I must confess my sympathy with the unfortunate nation is much diminished by the foolish manner in which she has behaved towards us. Eight months ago she might have compromised the matter, while we were at Corpus Christi; but she delayed and delayed, until finally her refusal to receive our Minister renders active operations on our part more justifiable than they would have been had she adopted a more energetic course from the first.

I have just finished reading your letter of the twenty-fourth, in which you desire answers to several queries which I will take in order. In the first place, I am quite proud you should consider my present position so distinguished as to reconcile you to my absence, and it is a great gratification to me to know that your dear father is also pleased with my position. This affords me great consolation in what is, I assure you, a terrible trial to me, the separation from you and my children; and if it should be my fortune (bachelor-soldiers would call it *good* fortune) to see actual fighting, I shall be nerved with the recollection of your good opinion, and of the dear boys who will inherit my reputation as well as my name. I regret, in answer to your father's inquiry on the subject of promotion, to say there is

¹ Lieutenant George Deas, of the Fifth Infantry.

but little prospect of that. Out of the thirty-six officers of my corps, there are but three here. Of these only one ranks me; so that, in a battle, were the whole army to be cut off but himself and myself, neither would gain any promotion, and were all to be cut off but myself, I should only advance one on the list of my corps. Promotion, by brevet, as it is called, which is the reward of distinction and gallantry, is open to me; and I trust if I meet the enemy I may have the chance to come back a captain.

Your second inquiry refers to Sargie's learning to read. Upon this point my opinion is decided that he should not be forced against his inclination, and I would have no objection to his delaying it till he was six or seven years of age. In the meantime paying every attention to his physical powers, so that the body may acquire full strength to bear the mental growth. I never knew a precocious boy to be a distinguished man, though doubtless there are individual exceptions to this as to all other rules. But if he is properly taught after he begins to learn, he will learn more in three years than he would have done in six, if he commenced at four. Besides, he will learn to better advantage, the impressions being more durable. My advice therefore is, not to force him, but let him take plenty of exercise in the open air. Keep always cheerful, happy and in good temper, for education is as much dependent on this as nature. Many a fine disposition has been ruined by injuring a poor boy's stomach by too early habits of study, making his life too sedentary and destroying his comfort for life. He can have his little mind as well impressed by your reading to him or telling him proper biblical and historical anecdotes, as it could be by his reading himself, and the inclination will come in time. I would not fail to impress upon him the necessity of learning to read, but do not weary and annoy him so as to give him disgust for the sight of a book.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *April 21, 1846.*

I should like much to join your French class, and promise myself to study hard when I return. I cannot tell you the mortification I have experienced when I reflect on the opportunity I have lost in yourself and Mr. Merino to acquire Spanish. Every day almost, there are communications, written and verbal, passing between the generals in command, and there are no interpreters but ignorant Mexicans and Texans, who have picked up a little English and Spanish. However, it has been a good lesson which I trust will have its effect.

I must now resume my narrative of events, which, doubtless, you are anxious to hear; and indeed some things of importance have occurred. I think when I last wrote I informed you of the peaceful intelligence that General Arista was to assume command, and hostilities not to commence till the 1st of June. This at the time was a mere report in Matamoras, and as such brought over to us. Much evidence of the same kind has since been given, to prove that Arista is to command, but as to the precise period of hostilities nothing is known. From a careful perusal of the news brought by the steamer *Mississippi*, with Mr. Slidell, I am led to believe that Mexico has no intention of declaring, or commencing, the war herself. In fact the proclamation of Paredes, after Mr. Slidell's departure, is to that effect. He says he has no power to declare war, that the Congress must do it, but that he will repel invasion. Now, at the time of his proclamation, he had known for weeks of our march, and his not ordering us to be attacked, notwithstanding they consider us as invaders, proves he is most reluctant to begin the war. But I fear that Mr. Polk has no such restraining influences; on the contrary I believe he desires a war with Mexico, for he can then take possession of California, and hold it by right of conquest, without affording England any pretext for interference. But the fact that Mexico has pledged California to England, in payment of bonds given for money loaned, and upon which she does not even pay the interest, will give England a plausible pretext for interfering with the sale of California to us, on the ground that it is mortgaged to her. Hence Mr. Polk would prefer acquiring it by conquest. What would have to be paid for it will cover the expenses of the war, and indeed Mexico may be forced to pay the expenses herself. If some such reason has not influenced the President, why should he insist on Mr. Slidell's being received as a Minister Plenipotentiary, when he was repeatedly assured by the Mexicans they would only receive a Commissioner? If he at heart desired peace, there was nothing undignified in making him a Commissioner. The treaties of Ghent, and that of '83 in Paris, were made by Commissioners, and it is usual, upon renewing intercourse, or after wars, to have Commissioners to arrange the preliminaries, and even treaties, and then send your Ministers, for it may happen the Commissioners may not agree, and recourse must again be had to arms. The requiring Mr. Slidell to insist on being received as Minister was a sad blunder of Mr. Polk's, if he desired peace; but my impression is he desires war. The question now is,

What will the United States do? I think the Senate will oppose, as also the House, a formal declaration, but will content themselves with blockading the coasts of Mexico, both east and west, and with occupying the whole of the territory we claim. However, upon that point you will be better and earlier informed than myself; but if something is not soon done we shall get up a war here, for in spite of our prudence and forbearance, act after act is being committed which must end in war.

I am sorry to tell you the remains of Colonel Cross have been found, and it is now placed beyond a doubt that he was foully assassinated by a party from the other side who were hovering around our camp, and at the very time General Ampudia replied to General Taylor's letter, denying any knowledge of his disappearance, it is now known he was wearing the watch of the unfortunate victim, and some other officer riding his horse. It appears from all the testimony that can be obtained, that the Colonel was captured while riding alone some three miles from the camp, by a party of *rancheros*, as they are called (that is, a militia composed of the laborers upon the farms or ranches); but that they had an officer of the regular army with them, and that this officer carried him into the woods and then foully murdered him and stripped him of all his clothes. His body was discovered by a Mexican, and a party sent out to bring in his remains. They will be buried with the honors of war, though his poor son intends taking them to Washington with him. This poor fellow has won the sympathy and affection of the whole army by his manly deportment ever since his father's disappearance. He held on to the last moment in the vain hope that his father was a prisoner on the other side, but now he is satisfied of his murder, and his grief you can well imagine when you recollect his youth, and his position, far away from friends and among strangers. This dastardly act, and the mean lie of the commanding-general on the other side, have inspired us all with a burning desire to avenge the Colonel's murder, and have destroyed all the sympathy that some few did still entertain for a people whom they deemed unjustly treated. These prowling parties have of late become more bold and numerous. They are just like Indians, hiding in the bushes whenever a force comes after them, and seizing upon all single individuals they find on the road. Two young officers¹ desirous of distinguishing them-

¹ Lieutenants Theodorick H. Porter, of the Fourth Infantry, and Stephen D. Dobbins, of the Third Infantry.

selves, one of whom was a son of Commodore Porter, obtained permission to-day from the General to take each ten men and go and lie in wait for these fellows, and capture them. I do not anticipate success on their part, and fear their force is too small, but they are sanguine and have gone. You must not be alarmed about me; I shall take good care not to go out without a proper escort. I am too old a soldier to be caught in such a trap, and have seen Indian warfare before to-day. Before Colonel Cross's death it was usual for the officers to ride in all directions, hunting and for exercise, but I never went more than two miles, always with a party, and always on open ground, where I had a fair view of every thing around me. I do not mention this in a spirit of vain boasting, but to calm any fears you may have of my falling in as inglorious a manner as did Colonel Cross. He was an officer of great distinction, and had just made up his mind to leave the army, owing to an unfortunate question of rank, which has grown up of late years, and which the President had decided against him. A few days more and he would have been on his way to rejoin his family, and as he was a man of property, had expressed his intention of leaving the service, and living at home. Such is the will of God, and such the uncertainty of human plans and projects.

This intelligence as you may imagine has cast a gloom over all.

April 22.

The plot is thickening. My worst fears with reference to Lieutenant Porter are realized. Some of his men have returned and report he is without doubt cut off. The story, which is very plain, and which has been confirmed by some Mexicans, is as follows: Porter followed the thicket which skirts the bank of the river for some twelve miles, when he suddenly came on the camp of some Mexicans, one of whom snapped his gun at him. Porter discharged his gun at him twice, and his men then fired on the Mexicans, who retreated in disorder, leaving some nine horses, which Porter took charge of. He then mounted his men on the horses, and was about returning to camp, when they were overtaken by a violent shower of rain. The men then desired him to stop, to allow them to protect their arms, but he unfortunately (here was a great error), in his anxiety to return, pushed on, and very soon came to the edge of an open space where he was met by a Mexican, who commenced bowing and scraping until he had seen how many were in his party, when he

rushed into the thicket and immediately one hundred men showed themselves and opened a fire on our people. Poor Porter fired both barrels of his gun, and his pistol, and then, finding the *guns of his men would not go off*, motioned them to retire into the thicket, which they did, scattering and straggling into camp. One of them, however, remained near, to look after Porter, and saw him fall from his horse with appearance of great bleeding from his thigh, and in a few minutes he was motionless. The rascals, as soon as our men retreated, rushed out of the thicket and commenced plundering Porter and one of his men who was killed at the first fire. All the rest of the party, nine in number, got safe into camp, and the Mexicans tell us that Porter killed one man and wounded two so badly they are not expected to live. This is considered a most unfortunate affair, as the effect on these people will be to give them confidence, although they had one hundred to eleven, and our guns unserviceable. It was thought by many most injudicious to allow an officer to go out with so small a party; but it was his own suggestion to go, and his request to have only ten men, as he feared a larger party would frighten them out of his way; and no doubt is entertained that had his guns have been efficient, he would have routed the whole of them; indeed they have acknowledged it was their intention to run in that event. A party of fifty dragoons was immediately sent out to look for him, but they could not find the place, owing to the thicket not admitting of their horses passing. They, however, met the other party, under a Lieutenant Dobbins, and informed them of Porter's disaster and advised them to return; but Dobbins said his pieces were in fine order and he would not abandon the pursuit till he found Porter or the Mexicans; and so cowardly are they known to be, that no apprehension is entertained for Dobbins, as he is known to be extremely prudent and an excellent woodsman. A party of fifty foot, however, leave to-morrow, and as the Mexicans will without doubt retire for a few days, to avoid the search which they know will be made, it is probable this party will reinforce Dobbins before he reaches them, and the two together will give them a sound drubbing.

Poor Porter leaves a young wife and a child. He was a clever fellow, loved by all; and though regretted by all, it is a great consolation to know he met a soldier's fate in so gallant a manner, and made three of his enemies bite the dust before he fell. They must have been great cowards to allow nine of our men to return unpursued to camp; some of them, although only fifteen miles distant, being three

days in finding their way through the thicket. Porter's fate is much less deplorable than Colonel Cross's. The body of the latter was brought in to-day, and will be buried to-morrow with the honors of war, and his son will then take the remains to Washington.

Doubtless you will ask if this is not war. Yet it is not so considered. General Taylor informed the authorities on the other side, on his arrival here, that all armed parties found on this side would be captured, and it was in pursuance of this that Porter went out to scour the thicket. If they do not complain on the other side, we shall not; our loss, with the exception of Porter, being only equal to theirs. But such acts as these, if continued, must bring on a general collision. General Taylor is desirous of avoiding this if he can, as he wishes war to be the act of the Government, and not his. But I have no doubt that as soon as the field-work we are constructing is finished, he will take more active measures to punish them than he is able to do now, as all his force is employed in constructing the work. The feeling of exasperation against the Mexicans is most intense, and if we once get to blows we will make them repent their dastardly murders. Last night a boat which had drifted across the river was secured by our guards. An hour afterwards a party was seen approaching the shore in another boat, evidently with the intention of seizing it. They were hailed by the sentinel, and not answering, were fired at, and some six or seven shots were also fired at them by the guard, but with what effect is not known, owing to the darkness. They, however, retired, and the boat is still in our possession. This brings me up to to-day. On the other side they have taken no notice of these things, and we of course let them pass.

Several naval officers arrived in camp this morning from Point Isabel, among them young George Harrison Hare. They are attached to the fleet, which, under General Taylor's orders, has been blockading the mouth of the river; and they came to report to the General that they had warned off two vessels laden with flour for Matamoras. This will make my gentlemen open their eyes when they find their supplies cut off. The only chance for them now is to send to Monterey, some three hundred miles in the interior, which is the nearest agricultural district, and it is extremely doubtful if there is sufficient surplus produce even there to feed so large a force as they have collected opposite, besides provisions for the town.

I wish you would preserve these letters, as they will be of some use to me hereafter in referring to events.

April 23.

This has been something of an eventful day, inasmuch as we have at length assumed a position with reference to these people which I think will bring them to their senses.

General Taylor received this morning a despatch from General Ampudia, referring to two vessels laden with supplies for his army, which he says, in violation of all usages of civilized nations, have been captured without a formal declaration of war or blockade, and demands their return. He says, "it is useless for me to recapitulate the evident justice of my demand, or the inevitable consequences that will result from an unexpected refusal." General Taylor has sent him back an answer that I fancy will puzzle him to act on, and has at length assumed a position in which I am sure the country will support him, and for not assuming which earlier many of less prudent judgment have censured him.

He recapitulates to General Ampudia the leading recent occurrences. He says: "On breaking up his camp at Corpus Christi, he published an order to his army, informing them the War Department had ordered him to take position on the left bank of the Rio Grande, but to do it in a peaceable manner, and only to exert force when an attempt should be made to stop him. He therefore enjoined on all officers and soldiers the strictest courtesy to be exercised towards all Mexicans peaceably pursuing their avocations; that his object was not war, and that no individual should be disturbed in the exercise of his civil or religious rights; that nothing was to be taken by force, but the highest market price to be paid for every article the people were disposed to sell. This order was translated into Spanish and distributed along the frontier, and to his certain knowledge met the eye of the commander at Matamoras. But, notwithstanding his order, he was met some twenty miles from the Colorado, and at the Colorado, by armed parties who protested against his advance; said they considered it as an act of war, and we could be considered only as enemies. When near Point Isabel he was met by a civil deputation, who said the same thing, and whilst talking to them, the village of Frontone was set on fire, itself an act of war; that on arriving at the banks of the river he sent an officer to explain to the commanding-general (then Mejin) that we were simply in the discharge of a duty, which we desired to execute in a peaceful manner, having nothing to do with the responsibility of ordering it, and desiring amicable relations should exist until one of the two Governments should order

otherwise; but he was answered that they viewed us as enemies. He, moreover, in a spirit of compromise, told them he would not interfere with their using the Brazos de Santiago, to land their supplies, and they might collect revenue till the question was definitely settled between the two Governments, which offer they indignantly declined. That since that time they have assumed a hostile attitude, in the erection of offensive works, and in sending over to this side armed parties, and at this moment they detain in Matamoras, as a *prisoner of war*, an individual who, voluntarily, and without arms, went over there. Still," says General Taylor, "we failed to notice these oft-repeated declarations and acts, until his Excellency, General Ampudia, arrived and formally summoned him to leave here in twenty-four hours, or he was instructed to say by his Government, war would inevitably ensue. Then his forbearance ceased, and not being permitted by his orders to leave here, he adopted the alternative presented, and prepared himself for the consequences. Not deeming it necessary to commence by an overt act the hostilities himself, he yet adopted the mildest measure authorized by the state of war they had so often informed him existed, and ordered the blockade of the river, so far as not to permit vessels to enter. That in pursuance of these orders, two vessels from New Orleans, with flour, had been warned off, and had returned to New Orleans. That no captures had been made, but that, if any attempt was made to force the passage, they would be made. That he had reported this blockade to his Government and should not take it off till it ordered him so to do, unless he, General Ampudia, was disposed to enter into some arrangement by which peace and quiet should be restored here until the two Governments could come to some definite action, either by treaty or a formal declaration of war, in which case he would very willingly withdraw the blockade. That as to the consequences, he begged to assure his Excellency he was ready to meet any that might ensue, and that he was at perfect liberty to take any action he thought proper. That if this should bear heavy on them, they had nobody to blame but themselves, as he had manifested every disposition to execute his duty with as little unfriendly disposition as possible, but they had themselves rejected all his overtures and pursued such a course as rendered forbearance no longer a virtue. In conclusion, he called his Excellency's notice to the tone of his note, which was too exceptional to pass without comment. That hereafter, should he have communications to make they must be couched in language

respectful to himself and his country. He could no longer permit him to indulge in insinuations of fraud, deceit, etc., etc., and one thing particularly he desired to tell him, no threats or intimidations would ever prevent him from performing his duty, or cause him to change any line of conduct he deemed fit to adopt."

This will be a bitter pill for my friend General Ampudia to swallow. He must now either fight or back out of the foolish position he has assumed, keeping up a state of quasi-war, and sending over bombastic letters filled with denunciations and threatening us with the mighty power of the Magnanimous Mexican nation. The boot is on the other leg now, and we are going to try our hand at bullying. The letter has been in his hands half the day now, and no notice has been taken of it, or any action. My impression is that Arista, who is hourly expected, and who is a sensible man, will adopt General Taylor's suggestion, and have an armistice till the action of the two Governments can be had. I do not believe the cowardly rascals will fight unless they attempt some enterprise against our wagon train to get provisions, or attack our depot, in which case I presume we will knock their town about their ears and make it too hot for them to live in.

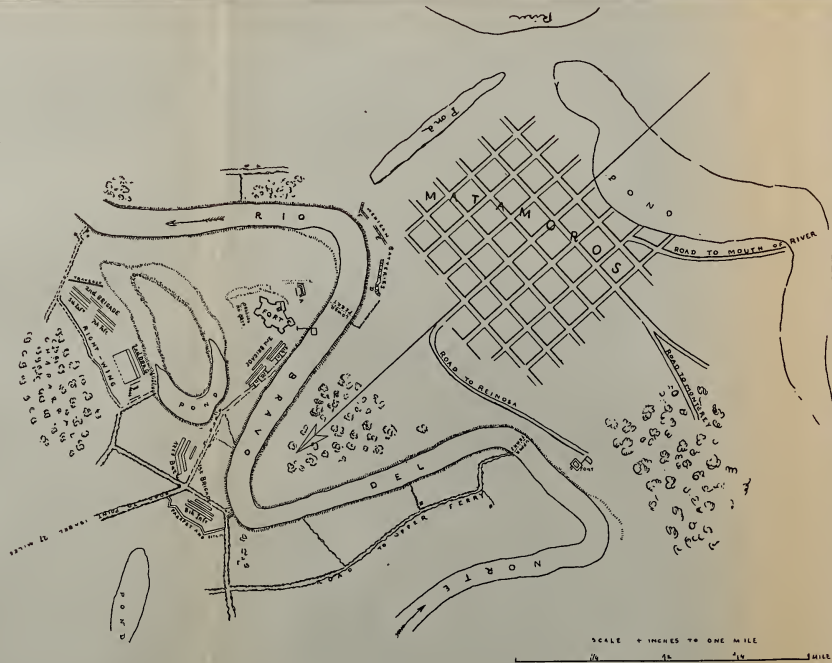
General Taylor's letter was courteous, straight forward and to the point, and it now rests with them to adopt the alternative, either to fight us, or to behave like rational beings till the moment when our Government or theirs shall see fit to alter things. My hope is, that when all these things become known at Washington, our force will be largely increased, the coasts east and west strictly blockaded, we advanced into the Northern Departments of Mexico, and accompanied by a commissioner, who shall be empowered to arrange the preliminaries of a treaty between the two countries whenever the Mexicans can be brought to their senses. General Scott¹ would be an excellent officer for this duty, and I hope the Government will send him here with some fifteen thousand additional and efficient troops. This will be the shortest way of settling matters, and I believe the only way. These people will palaver without action to the end of time, and nothing but strong and prompt acts on our part will ever bring them to reason.

I do not think you will complain of the length of this letter, or accuse me of omitting interesting matter. Upon deliberation I deem it the best plan to tell you the truth and the whole truth, believing

¹ Major-General Winfield Scott, General-in-Chief, U. S. A.

*Sketch showing the
position of the
Army of Occupation
on the left bank of the Rio Bravo
opposite Matamoros. -
April 25 1846.*

- A BRAGG'S BATTERY
3 Du. Pts. and 1 Howitzer
- B DUNCAN'S Co. do.
- C RICE COOLEY'S Co. do. do.
- D LOGG'S BATTERY 9 - 8 Pts.
- E CIRCULAR BATTERY 5 EMBARAZURES
under 2 mounds on the PLANK
- F BATTERY with 4 EMBARAZURES
- G BATTERY with 5 EMBARAZURES
- H SUPPOSED MARCHED BATTERY
- I SQUARE REDoubT with 4 Pts.



*Drawn for Mr. Maule
by his assistant James
St. Maule Capt. Eng.*

SKETCH SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION OPPOSITE MATAMORAS
(FAC-SIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL. SEE PAGE 74)

you have firmness and energy to prevent you from indulging in unnecessary alarm, or fretting yourself about fancied dangers. We are not yet in war, and I am reluctant to believe we shall be, except it be by our own action, in which case you will be sooner informed than myself. It must, however, be submitted to if it comes, and true religion teaches us our lives are in the hands of Him who gave them, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His knowledge. Let us rely then on His mercy and kindness, and submit with cheerfulness and resignation to His Divine will.

I am in fine health and good spirits, enjoying myself as well as I can away from you and the dear children.

I hear so much of the beauty of the table-land near Monterey, that I begin to feel great desire to see it, being confident if we start with a proper force nothing will impede our progress there. My time is principally occupied in drawing, and all my spare moments I am on my horse's back, galloping about within the lines of our camp. I find the more I exercise the better I am, and really believe if I could be kept going all the time I should be infinitely improved in health and appearance.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *April 26, 1846.*

I have a few moments to write you one of my hurried letters. Things have assumed a more serious aspect since the date of my last letter. General Arista has arrived and sent over a letter, informing General Taylor of his arrival, and as hostilities had been commenced (alluding to the blockade and Porter's affair), he had no other course to pursue than by his deeds to vindicate the Nation's honor and cause the United States to respect Mexico. General Taylor has replied to him his object was and is peace; he had hoped from General Arista's high character that, on his arrival, some good understanding could be had between them, but as he insisted upon war, he, General Taylor, should leave to him the responsibility of commencing it, but was fully prepared for the consequences.

Simultaneously with the receipt of Arista's letter, we received authentic information they were crossing the river about twenty-four miles above here, with the supposed intention of attacking our train and depot, but this has been the rumor so often before, that we are all tired of it. Still, so authentic does the General deem it now to be, that he has sent for reinforcements to the interior of Texas, and to New Orleans, and we hope to have them here by the middle of

next month. Then we shall be prepared for offensive operations, whereas, now, our force is too small except for defence; but in this respect we are strong, and no Mexican force can make us move from where we are.

I am frank to confess that I believe a collision is not improbable, but, at the same time, there is so little absolutely known of the Mexicans, their views and intentions, that it is impossible to form correct judgment. One consolation is to be derived from the present aspect of affairs, that I really believe a collision will be the best means of accelerating matters; in fact I fear this is the only way the question will ever be settled, for these people have no reason in their conduct. My only regret is the Government did not send a large force in the first instance, and overawe the Mexicans. If we were determined to take the country from them, it should have been done in such a manner as to crush at once all hopes of resistance on the part of the Mexicans. Ten thousand men would have effected this, and judicious economy would have suggested their being sent, for a war will cost a hundred times as much.

CAMP AT THE FRONTONE, POINT ISABEL, *May 2, 1846.*

We arrived at this place last night, with twenty-two hundred men, our object being to obtain provisions and other supplies, and to relieve this point, which General Taylor understood was threatened by the enemy. We left five hundred and fifty men in the fort we constructed opposite Matamoras, in a position capable of defending themselves. I send you a little sketch of our position in our camp opposite Matamoras; my tent was the last in the line, marked "Head-quarters." Our position was very strong, but the necessity of coming here for provisions obliged the General to leave with his whole force, except the garrison of the fort inasmuch as we had positive information the enemy were in force between us and our depot, and it required a strong escort to protect the train. We, however, came here without seeing a soul, and it is questionable if we shall not return in the same way. But, as I wrote you in my last letter of the 26th ultimo, the war has commenced and cannot now be finished without fighting. We must therefore both make up our minds to resign ourselves to the will of God, and looking cheerfully and with hope on the bright side, trust to His mercy to carry us through the difficulty, as He has done many times before. I think, of course, a great deal of you and my dear children, and feel confident it will not

be long now before I rejoin you, and then our happiness will compensate us fully for all the misery we have endured for the last nine months. I believe a war is the speediest means of bringing about a final settlement. Of course I should have preferred a settlement without a war, but it is useless to comment on the past; the future alone must now occupy us. We are yet too weak to act in any other manner than on the defensive, which we are fully prepared to do, and if the enemy seek us, we will give a good account of ourselves, but, until reinforced, we cannot seek them.

CAMP AT THE FRONTONE, POINT ISABEL, *May 5, 1846.*

I have at length most glorious news, which gives me heartfelt pleasure to communicate to you. In my last letter I sent you a sketch of our position opposite Matamoras, with the fort, or rather field-work which we had constructed, and in which we left the Seventh Regiment of Infantry, with detachments from other corps, amounting in all to some five hundred and fifty men. We left our camp on the 1st instant, to march to the relief of this place, and to procure provisions and ammunitions. We arrived here on the second, finding all safe, and on the morning of the third we distinctly heard here heavy cannonading, supposed to be an attack on our fort by the Mexicans. General Taylor, as you may well imagine, was in great anxiety. He could not leave this point, without increasing its defences and strengthening its garrison; this required time and a diminution of his force. At the same time, the sound of the enemy's guns, and the consciousness that our force was too small in the fort for any purpose than merely to repel assaults, made all anxious to hasten to its relief. He, however, despatched an express by a gallant Texan, by the name of Walker, who being perfectly well acquainted with the country, said he could make his way into the work and bring us back the news. This bold fellow left on the afternoon of the third and had not returned at 8 A. M. to-day. In the meantime one or two others had started out at the same time, for the same purpose, but returned, stating the country was filled with Mexicans, and it was impossible to get through them. Fears were openly expressed for Walker, when about nine this morning he made his appearance, having been in the fort and brought an official report from Major Brown, its commanding officer.

Major Brown reports that at 5 A. M. of the morning of the third, the Mexicans opened all their batteries on the work, and kept up a

vigorous and continuous fire during the whole day. He commenced deliberately with the four eighteen-pounders of Lowd's Battery (see my sketch) and regularly dismounted every gun of the Mexicans, that was visible, by the evening, completely silencing their fire, with the exception of one mortar placed in the circular battery of the Mexicans, which was sunk so low beneath the parapet that they could not reach it. With this mortar the Mexicans continued their attack up to the time Walker left (yesterday afternoon) but had effected no damage to our work or people, except killing one Sergeant by the bursting of a shell. Major Brown had expended but a small proportion of his ammunition, and was in high spirits, expressing himself prepared to hold out as long as they had provisions. Walker says in addition, that about one-half hour after he left he heard platoon-firing, or rather small arms, and thinks the works have been assaulted. But from this we entertain no fears; the works cannot be carried by a mere assault, and they cannot erect their batteries, owing to our superior artillery and artillerists, so as to make a breach. Therefore we now feel no concern about the fate of the works, and the good news has so inspirited all of us that we may consider ourselves equal to double the number we were before.

I am sorry I cannot report I had a share in the affair, for every officer who is there will without doubt be promoted for the gallant defence. By-the-by, the engineer of the work, Captain Mansfield, is from Hartford, Connecticut, and has often spoken to me of the Alsops and Dr. Muller. If they recollect him, say he has gained for himself great credit for the design and execution of the work, and still more for his energy and bravery in its defence.

Yesterday a steamer arrived from New Orleans, bringing dates to the 28th ultimo. An officer who came in here states the only intelligence they had received was the assassination of Colonel Cross, and that this had created a tremendous excitement, and when the news of actual war having commenced reaches there he has no doubt five thousand men will be over here in ten days. With this force we shall drive all the Mexicans to the mountains, but in the meantime we are all anxious to give them a sound thrashing before the volunteers arrive, for the reputation of the army; for should we be unable to meet them before they come, and then gain a victory, it would be said the volunteers had done it, and without them we were useless. For our own existence, therefore, we desire to encounter them. The steamer also brings intelligence of the expected departure, soon after

she was to sail, of two steamers, one bringing one hundred and eighty recruits, and the other four companies of the First Regiment of Infantry. This will increase our little army some three hundred men, which will render the garrison of this place sufficiently strong to sustain itself against any attack, and leave General Taylor some twenty-four hundred men to march to Matamoras with. Our only inferiority (except in numbers) to the enemy is in cavalry, they having some two thousand and we only about two hundred. But we have two batteries of field artillery (one you have seen in Philadelphia, Major Ringgold's) which are so far superior to anything they have, from their rapidity of manœuvring and firing, that we fully expect annihilating their cavalry, when they show themselves. We only wait now for the arrival of the steamers from New Orleans, when we shall march for Matamoras.

I should have mentioned your friend Dr. McPhail is in the fort, and it is confidently anticipated that even before this he has composed a piece of poetry commemorative of the event, which will be set to music, and without doubt you will receive an acquisition to your musical library.

We were obliged to leave all our baggage in the fort and in my trunk I left your miniature, bringing with me the daguerreotype. I very much fear some impudent shell has ere this blown you up, and you will have been in action before myself.

CAMP AT THE FRONTONE, POINT ISABEL, *May 7, 1846.*

I have but little additional intelligence to give you, beyond my letter of the fifth of our operations here. We are assured of the safety of our friends at the fort opposite Matamoras, by hearing at intervals the sound of their guns. About two hundred and fifty men have arrived since my last, and will be left to strengthen this place, and an additional quantity of artillery (ten and twelve pounders) which will make it strong enough to resist any force the Mexicans can bring against it. Under these circumstances General Taylor deems it advisable to move to the support of the fort opposite Matamoras, as it is not impossible it may be getting short of ammunition. The army, in consequence, moves this afternoon at three o'clock, and I shall accompany it. There are various reports of the number and position of the enemy between us and our destination, but there are none to be relied on, except that we have every reason to expect to meet them whenever we move across the country. I fully believed

we should meet them coming here, and regretted they did not show themselves, for we had but a small train of wagons, and could have met them unencumbered. But now we take a large train of provisions and ammunition, which, in itself, impedes our movements and makes our loss the greater if we fail. All, however, are in the best of spirits, many believing they will not dare to meet us after the result of the attack upon the fort, and their experience of the superiority of our artillery; but my own impression is that we may expect to meet them every time we go out, though I should not be surprised if we did not see a single Mexican. A few days will tell, and I will write you by the first chance.

Our reinforcements—I mean the militia—are looked for daily, and as soon as we get them Matamoras will be ours. Then we shall command the river and can use it for our boats, instead of this inconvenient twenty-seven miles of road that we have to haul over now, and which is almost impassable in wet weather.

By the time this reaches you the intelligence of the commencement of the war will be in the papers, and probably the action of the Government therein. I trust it will be speedy and energetic. Mexico, to be sure, is an insignificant power, but it is as necessary to teach her her position as if she were more formidable. Besides, I believe she is fully able to cope with us for some time, unless we exert our whole energy in bringing her to terms. There should be on this frontier a well-appointed army of thirty thousand men. With these we can occupy the whole of the Northern Departments, to the foot of the mountains, keeping a strict blockade of her coasts on both sides. She will soon have a revolution in our favor, and the question settled.

CAMP AT LAS PALMAS on the field of battle, about two miles
from our camp opposite Matamoras, May 9, 1846.

Give thanks for my having passed through two hard-fought fields,¹ untouched and safe, in both of which we have been signally victorious. The Mexican Army is utterly routed and defeated, and we have made an impression on them that will last for a long time. But I will endeavor to give you a succinct account from my last dates of affairs up to this moment.

I think I wrote you on the seventh, just previous to our departure from the Frontone to relieve our fort opposite Matamoras. I fear

¹ El Palo Alto, May 8, 1846, and La Resaca de la Palma, May 9, 1846.

my letter was gloomy, as I felt confident the enemy, excited by the booty of our wagon train (three hundred wagons, loaded with provisions and ammunition), would give us battle and test their strength with ours. Of course I could not anticipate the result, and felt it my duty to refer to probabilities.

We encamped on the seventh in the open prairie, about seven miles from the Frontone. On the eighth, about one o'clock, when we were eleven miles from the Frontone, at a pond of water called *El Palo Alto*, the enemy appeared on our front. General Taylor very coolly allowed all the army to rest and refresh themselves, and had our whole train brought up and parked on the pond. The enemy in the meantime came out of the woods, some two miles beyond our position, and formed in line of battle, less than a mile in front of us. As soon as General Taylor had rested the men, he formed his line and slowly advanced to meet them. They opened their fire from three batteries, each of three guns (some twelve pounders and some six pounders), which was immediately answered by our two batteries of field artillery (six pounders), and from two eighteen pounders which we were carrying to arm the fort with. The cannonading commenced at half-past two and continued till after dark (seven P. M.), with the exception of about three-quarters of an hour, when it ceased, owing to the prairie having taken fire, which concealed us from each other. During the cannonading the enemy's cavalry made several ineffectual attempts to charge our lines, and made a demonstration upon our train. Each time they were met by our squares coolly, and repulsed with heavy loss. Unfortunately for us, our train was a complete incubus to us. The General was obliged to make his dispositions to defend it; we had nothing but infantry and artillery (only two hundred cavalry), while the enemy had some twenty-five hundred (regular and irregular) horse. The affair was therefore one of artillery only, as our infantry had to maintain their position around the train, for fear if they advanced the cavalry would attack it, in our rear. Our fellows behaved with the greatest gallantry, never flinching under the heavy fire of the enemy, whose artillery was well served, though, as I had anticipated, the superiority of our batteries was most fully demonstrated. Night closed with our driving the enemy back so far as to place us on the ground they occupied when the action commenced. Many and various were the surmises as to the result. Some supposed the enemy had got the worst of it, but all fully expected to renew the contest the next morning. Both

armies encamped in sight of each other, every man just lying on the ground where he stood, and glad to sleep from fatigue. Our force was about two thousand; the enemy's, since ascertained, three thousand regular infantry and artillery, one thousand regular cavalry and two thousand irregular troops, making in all six thousand men. Our loss in killed and wounded about fifty; the enemy's, from information since obtained, many hundreds. I was in the action during the whole time, at the side of General Taylor, and communicating his orders, and I assure you I may justly say I have had my "*baptême de feu*." An officer of the General's staff had his horse shot under him, not two yards from me, and some five horses and men were killed at various times right close to me. Major Ringgold, I regret to say, is seriously wounded, but it is supposed will recover—in fact, is doing very well. Some three other officers were wounded; but you will have the official accounts before long, to which I refer you.

The enemy behaved very badly under our fire, as we ascertain from a prisoner taken this morning that our fire was so galling they deserted by battalions, and were only restrained by their officers shooting them from running *en masse*; and had we charged them just at the close, we should have routed them *in toto*. But, unfortunately, the fear of exposing our train, and the smoke from the burning prairie preventing us from seeing the impression our artillery was making, deterred the General from ordering the charge.

This morning at daybreak we arose, expecting to go at it again, but on advancing towards the wood presumed to be occupied by the enemy, we found they had given us the slip during the night. We then examined the battle-field, and found it covered with their poor fellows and horses, with boxes of ammunition and all kinds of plunder left in their hasty retreat; and from some wounded men brought in, we ascertained that General Arista, who commanded in person, was unable to keep his men on the ground after the terrible galling fire our artillery gave them. As soon as General Taylor found they had retreated, he left his train under protection of three hundred drivers, all of whom were armed, and some fifty of our men, with the two eighteen pounders, being confident they could with this force resist any attack of cavalry or infantry (and their artillery they had carried with them), and he then pushed on with the rest, some nineteen hundred men, to force them across the river. From the Palo Alto to the river there is a thicket called in this country Chaparral, which is almost impassable when you are off the road, and which consists of

thick thorny bushes, that tear your clothes to pieces in trying to get through them. After passing this, till we came within two miles of the river, a heavy discharge of grape was fired into our advance, showing the enemy still disputed our march. The General ordered up his artillery, threw out his infantry on the right and left, and after several discharges from our batteries, charged their batteries (also in the road) with our cavalry, and charged the bushes with the infantry; the result of which was that, after contesting the ground for some time, they gave way in all directions, and there was a total rout of the Grand Mexican Army that was going to eat us up. We captured seven pieces of artillery, all their pack-mules, several hundred in number, all their ammunition, several hundred stand of arms, and all their baggage. Took one general, two colonels, several captains and subalterns and some one hundred and fifty men, prisoners; and it is supposed it will take all day to-morrow to bring in their dead and wounded off the field, as the ground is said to be literally strewn with them. We pursued them to the river, and had the gratification of seeing our flag waving in triumph over our little field-work, and all the officers in it safe, except its gallant commander, Major Brown, who died from a wound received from the bursting of a shell.

The affair of to-day lasted from one to four o'clock, and proved the superiority of our infantry, as that of yesterday did of our artillery. We have whipped them in the open plain, and we have done so in the bushes, and I now believe the war will soon be ended. ✓ We have made a terrible impression on them, routed their army, which they cannot reorganize, all with our own gallant little force, without assistance, and in a few days we shall have reinforcements, which will enable us to advance into their country and dictate terms to them. No troops could have behaved better than have ours both yesterday and to-day. Our loss to-day is four officers killed, many wounded; the number of men I cannot tell, as the returns have not yet come in; indeed, the ground has not yet been searched. I am writing to you from the field of battle, as there is an express to start to-morrow, and I wish to apprise you of my safety, and to ask your thanks may be returned to God for preserving me through all. I only dwell now on the brilliant result of our efforts, and trust they will be appreciated. I cannot write you more. Tell mother of my safety, and let Major Bache see this, if in town. Say also to him that poor Blake, of ours, after having gallantly borne himself through

the conflict yesterday, unfortunately shot himself accidentally to-day, just as we marched, and it is feared the wound is mortal. Send in word to Mrs. Craig that the Major is safe and sound, though I saw some few balls spinning about his position. He has written, but for fear his letter might miscarry, I want this message sent.

CAMP AT LA RESACA DE LA PALMA, *May 11, 1846.*

I have been so much engaged with my duties as to have prevented me from writing anything since my last letter, in which I gave you an account of our great victory.

The scene of yesterday, the day after the battle, was most melancholy, and I spare you the description of it. Suffice it to say, we collected the dead and wounded of both armies, burying the former and doing everything to alleviate the sufferings of the latter, making no distinction between Mexicans and Americans. A survey of the field of action, and of the country between this and the river, proves that the Mexicans were totally and entirely routed, and the defeat could not have been more complete, except we had not the men to pursue the fugitives and make prisoners. We now ascertain that all the energies of the Mexican Government have been concentrated on this movement, and we have broken them up entirely. If, now, we only had the means of crossing the river, Matamoras would be ours; but, alas, General Taylor's repeated demands on the Government, and by it made to Congress, to send us a pontoon train, for bridges, have not been answered up to this date, and the enemy having carefully guarded and taken on their own side all the boats for many miles up and down the river, we are unable to cross! To-be-sure, it is to be said that we would do wrong to cross, were it not certain they would offer no resistance; but so certain are we of the great impression we have made on them, that I feel sure, were our little force to show themselves before the town, it would be immediately abandoned, and we should have nothing to do but to march in.

The beauty of the thing then would be that we had completed the whole thing, with our own force, without assistance, and when we were only expected to take possession of some point and defend it.

However, as it is, we will be in the town in a few days, and, I think, without any resistance.

The enemy's loss is tremendous. Their officers acknowledge losing four hundred killed and wounded, on the eighth, and we already have buried one hundred of their men here, where the affair of the

ninth came off, and we have some fifty wounded officers and men. But I must refer you to our official reports, which will show you the number of killed and wounded on both sides, and quantity of property we have taken possession of.

It will make you happy I know to hear of so brilliant an affair, and of your good husband having had a share in it. I assure you it consoles me for all I have suffered during the last nine months, and I can now show my face with something to sustain me when I return to Philadelphia. I want to see Matamoras taken, our steamboats established on the river, and every preparation made for advancing into their country. Then we shall have done more than we came here for.

I have but little time to devote to you, as I am ordered to make a sketch of the field of battle. So I must conclude by telling you I am perfectly well in every respect.

CAMP OPPOSITE MATAMORAS, *May 15, 1846.*

Here we are in our old camp, masters of everything around us, and with the road to our depot perfectly clear. I trust you will receive my previous letters in time to prevent any unnecessary alarm from the thousand wild and extravagant rumors which I see by the papers from New Orleans have been put in circulation. It appears as if only the timid in our camp have deigned to enlighten the press, for they have every place taken, and our condition was represented as truly deplorable.

We all congratulate ourselves heartily in having done everything without any assistance whatever, and we now trust the country will look upon the army in a more favorable light, and be disposed to award to them some little efficiency.

It is now rendered beyond a doubt that the Mexicans had in the affair of the eighth between six and seven thousand men, while we had but two thousand, and on the ninth they had six thousand, we having only one thousand seven hundred. Their rout was total, and nothing saved the destruction of their entire army but the approach of night and the nature of the country, a dense thicket, which enabled them to disperse and reach the river during the night. The Mexican officers acknowledge the loss by killed and wounded to be one thousand two hundred on their side; then some three hundred were drowned in crossing the river, and between one and two thousand have deserted them, thus leaving them with only about four

thousand in Matamoras. Could we have crossed the river on the tenth, the town would have been ours without a shot, but the necessity of recruiting our people, and the want of means to cross, prevented us, and it is not improbable that they may have recuperated so far as to induce them to make a stand.

But while their forces are diminishing, ours are daily increasing. Already six hundred regulars and volunteers have arrived, and information has been received that ten thousand volunteers are being raised and will be here in a few weeks, making our force fully twelve thousand efficient men. Now, if two thousand routed seven thousand, how many will twelve thousand rout; you can establish the proportion, and I trust the result will remove from your mind any apprehension of my safety, inasmuch as it is a perfect impossibility that the Mexican Government can raise one-half the number required by the answer.

We shall to-morrow cross the river some few miles above here and invest the town, at the same time summoning them to surrender. In the event of their refusal, we shall open our batteries, consisting of six eighteen-pounders, four twelve-pounders, eight nine-pounders, and twelve six-pounders, and two ten-inch mortars, and if we do not soon make them change their minds, I shall be very much mistaken. At the same time we shall cut off all their supplies from the interior and starve them out.

The town must fall or be knocked to pieces, and I think the inhabitants will compel the soldiers to evacuate it, rather than stand the bombardment. We have now a chance to return the compliments they paid to our fort, called Fort Brown (in honor of its gallant commander, who fell while defending it), in which, during the seven days we were absent, they threw one thousand shells, and, strange to say, they only killed one sergeant and the commander, Major Brown. You will regret to hear poor Ringgold died of his wounds. This makes nine officers killed and eleven wounded so far. Our loss on the eighth and ninth amounts to one hundred and eighty-two killed and wounded, being about one-twelfth of those engaged, said to be large, but most trifling in comparison with that of the Mexicans.

I cannot as yet anticipate the future. The opinion of some is that they cannot recuperate, but I am disposed to believe they will try it again; but as I feel confident the result will be the same, I think then they will be ready to negotiate and compromise matters. Indeed, I do not think the war will now be of many months' duration,

and I begin to hope I shall yet be with you by the fall, should it please God to spare me that long.

By-the-by, I saw the other day Harry Ingersoll, who came up to our camp with despatches from Commodore Connor, who heard at Vera Cruz such statements of the preparations of Mexico against General Taylor, that he felt it his duty to bring his squadron to give us the assistance of his men. But, luckily, the game was finished ere he arrived. Ingersoll was quite well.

MATAMORAS, *May 19, 1846.*

Our army yesterday crossed the Rio Bravo (or Grande) and took possession of this place, without firing a gun, General Arista, with five thousand men and fourteen pieces of artillery, having precipitately abandoned the town the previous night at twelve o'clock, fearing the consequences of making any resistance. For, notwithstanding he had one well-constructed fort, and has had ample time to throw up intrenchments, and had a town constructed of brick and stone houses, in the solid manner of the Spaniards, which determined men could have held against three times their numbers, the impression we have made upon them is so severe, he dared not, or probably could not, induce his people to try to defend the place.

The last accounts we had of him he was thirty miles from here, in full retreat for Monterey, some two hundred and fifty miles from here, at the foot of the mountains. I do not think they will be able to organize another army to meet us on this frontier, and I fear we shall be obliged to invade their territory to come within reach of them. This will compel us to march some three hundred miles, over a country which does not contain in itself the means of supplying an army, and where we shall have to carry everything with us. Still I have no fears for the result. We shall beat them wherever we meet them, and in whatever numbers. I believe now, if a chance were offered them, they would negotiate and settle all difficulties. Indeed, the day before we crossed the river, General Arista sent an officer to General Taylor, who proposed to deliver up to him all the artillery and munitions of war in the town if he would not cross, and proposing an armistice until Mexico could be communicated with; intimating the Supreme Government would now be willing to compromise. General Taylor replied the time had passed for an armistice; he had offered one a few weeks ago—they had refused it, and had commenced the war—they must now take the consequences. He had

the means and the force to take the place, and the place he must have, and he left it to them to decide whether it should be done at the expense of life and property or not. They chose the latter alternative, and retreated, and if we only had a cavalry force, such as we ought to have, we could have pursued and taken the whole of them.

I do not think any plans are yet decided on for our future movements. The General will collect here and organize the large volunteer force sent from Louisiana and Texas, which, when it all gets here, will swell our force to over ten thousand men. By that time, probably, definite instructions will come from Washington by which he will be guided.

We have all been very much disappointed in the appearance of the town; decidedly the most pleasing view of it is from the other side. It is built in the Spanish fashion—low houses with flat roofs—but has evidently been on the decline for many years, as a majority of the houses are decayed and falling to pieces. It is almost entirely abandoned by the better part of the community, and those in it now are the most miserable-looking beings you ever saw; and as to the black-eyed senoras we all longed to see, we find nothing but old hags, worse looking than Indians. So you may rest easy, notwithstanding Master John's insinuations against me.

General Taylor would not occupy the town, but has encamped outside of it, and only allows a certain number of the men to go in at a time. He has a patrol on duty night and day, to pick up any of our people who are disorderly, and as yet not one injury has been committed on person or property.

I have been in the saddle all day, making a reconnoissance of the environs of the town, with a view to select suitable sites for encampments and for the defence of the place. Indeed, I am kept going all the time, and to this activity do I attribute my very good health. The weather is warm, but not so disagreeable as it is in Philadelphia at this season, as we always have a fine breeze.

Congratulate the Major (I mean Bache) for me on his return home. Say to him I wish sincerely he were here. There is a fine field for him, and I feel confident he would have a most eminent position.

I forgot to mention we lost yesterday a fine officer, Lieutenant Stevens, of the Dragoons, who was drowned in swimming his horse across the river.

CAMP AT MATAMORAS, May 24, 1846.

Your first query is in regard to General Worth. By this time you are doubtless *au fait* as to his movements, but as reports are so vague, I will concisely state the case, which I should have done before, did I deem you would have taken any interest in it.

By law there are only allowed in the army one major-general, two brigadier-generals, as many colonels as regiments and corps, etc. But there is a *fictitious rank*, as it were, called brevet rank, by which the President and Senate have power to confer promotion on individuals for gallantry, which rank takes effect, or is available, only under certain circumstances.

General Worth is only a colonel in the infantry (the Eighth Regiment), but in consequence of his meritorious services in Florida he had conferred on him the brevet rank of brigadier-general. Now the question which has agitated the army has been, "When does this rank take effect?" The laws upon the subject are conflicting and obscure. One party, the officers of regiments, or as they are called, of the line, contend it only does so when the President specially assigns an officer to duty with it, as in the case of General Taylor, who, similarly situated to General Worth, is only Colonel of the Sixth Infantry, and brigadier-general by brevet. But the President assigned him to the command of this army as a brigadier-general, and of course he ranks all brigadier-generals of the militia, and all of the army, of junior date to himself. The opposite party contend that it not only takes effect in the above case, but also in all cases where two corps of the army (such for instance as a regiment of artillery and one of infantry) are serving together. Now, Colonel Twiggs, commanding the dragoons, is a senior colonel to Worth, but has no brevet. The question then arose who would command in case of the death of General Taylor, and after much discussion and excitement, numerous petitions were sent to the President and Congress, and finally the President made a decision adverse to the brevet. Now, General Worth asserted that when he came here he was given to understand he should have the command, did anything happen to General Taylor, and the decision of the President, adverse to his claim, without assigning him specially, as he might have done, and thus make him second in command, he construed into an act of personal injustice of so grave a character as to compel him to leave the service. He therefore resigned his commission, and obtained a leave of two months to go to Washington and insist on his resignation

being accepted. At the time he did so there was no certainty of war, though great probability, and I believe his real intention was to endeavor at Washington to obtain the special assignment, placing him as a brevet. I think the step he took was most ill-judged and unfortunate. His duty as a soldier should have induced him to remain at his post in any capacity, however inferior, till all prospect of war had passed, and then he could have taken steps to relieve himself from what he deemed an indignity. But you must know that though a most excellent officer in some respects, General Worth has the great misfortune of being most rash and impetuous, and of constantly doing things which cooler reflection causes him to repent. This infirmity, in my opinion, renders him unfit to command, but on the field of battle, under another, his gallantry and bravery are well known and most conspicuous, and any service requiring these qualities, entrusted to him, will most undoubtedly be brilliantly executed. Upon this occasion he soon repented of his false step, and on arriving at Washington and finding affairs changed, he applied to withdraw his resignation, did so, and returned to-day, and is now on the ground, a simple colonel, no better off than when he left here, and having lost two occasions when, if present, he would have had an opportunity of meeting the enemy. I trust, however, the Government, after leaving him in his present position for a reasonable time, will give him his special assignment of brigadier-general, as a large militia force is coming into the field, and we shall require all the rank in the regular service we can raise, in order to keep these gentlemen-volunteers from taking the command.

I think my last letter was written after the occupation of Matamoras, which was most peaceably effected, General Arista having retired in the night, with his whole force, some four thousand men and fourteen pieces of artillery. All our disposable mounted force—one hundred and fifty dragoons and fifty volunteers—was sent in pursuit of them, to watch their movements and pick up stragglers. It reports that at first Arista's march was most disorderly, but as he receded he was able to organize better the command. It pursued them nearly sixty miles, and overtook the rear guard, which it attacked, killing five or six, and bringing in some twenty-five prisoners; by this time General Arista is in the mountains and out of our reach.

There are rumors in town of the advance of a force of five thousand men, under Bustamente, to reinforce Arista, but I very much fear there is no such good luck in store for us as the reappearance of a

Mexican army in this neighborhood, or anywhere this side of the Sierra Madre.

I think if they were foolish enough to undertake such an enterprise, their total defeat would end the war, and we would be spared the long march to Monterey. Another report also current in the town is that the soldiers were so exasperated against Arista for their defeat, accusing him of selling them to General Taylor, that when about fifty miles from here they rose *en masse*, determined to sacrifice him at the point of the bayonet, but their generals interceded on their knees for him, and his life was spared, but he was carried along as a prisoner. This may or may not be true; certain it is Arista is a ruined man; from being one of the most prominent in this part of Mexico, he is now universally abused. Do you remember I told you on his arrival he would either play into our hands, or throw himself into the arms of the Paredes party, in which latter case we should have war? Well, it has so turned out. Private letters from Paredes to him have been found among his papers, in which Paredes blackguards Almonte, says he sent him to France to get rid of him, and speaks of Santa Anna's party, and his measures to put them down. Now, it is notorious Arista was originally opposed to Paredes, and resigned his command on his accession to power. He must therefore have been bought off, to produce so great a change.

By-the-by, did I tell you I gave my name and address in Philadelphia to General La Vega, captured on the ninth, and told him your father and all your family could speak Spanish, and begged him to go see you if he passed through Philadelphia? You will find him a most gentlemanly man and will be pleased, I am sure, with him.

Four pieces of artillery, a large quantity of ammunition and public stores of all kinds, have been found secreted in the town. General Taylor, understanding that tobacco was a Government monopoly, seized all the tobacco at the Government depots in the town and distributed it among the men. This is the only prize of any kind that officer or man has received, though there was an immense quantity of public and private property taken, after the affair of the ninth.

May 25.

Nothing additional this morning of much interest. The search of the town is being continued, and all kinds of public stores are being rooted out of wells, of the river, and houses in all parts of the town. The people say Arista and his army are completely used up,

and that the Mexicans cannot make any stand this side of the Sierra Madre; so you may make your mind easy for some time to come yet.

To-day General Smith¹ arrived from New Orleans with about fifteen hundred men. Among the officers of his staff I found young Trudeau, from New Orleans. I do not know his christian name, but he told me he was of the same family as had lived in Philadelphia. Mason Graham, from Washington, has also come as a captain, and I believe almost everybody is coming—Bailie Peyton as a colonel, and Tom, Dick and Harry as majors, captains and privates. We shall be overrun, and I fear have too many for any practicable purposes; for we have now, and cannot increase it, only a limited supply of transportation, and sending too many men at this moment may have the effect of impeding the movements of all.

I will try to write often, but have so much to do that at night when I come home I am so fatigued that I think of nothing but going to sleep. You may probably ask, "What have you to do?" Well, after the battles I had to make surveys of each field; then I had to reconnoitre the river, eight miles above and five miles below our camp, to select a crossing place; and as soon as we entered Matamoras, instead of squatting down, as the rest have done, for a few days' quiet, I was immediately required to make an exact survey of the town and the adjacent country for one and a half miles. Upon this I am at present engaged.

CAMP AT MATAMORAS, *May 27, 1846.*

I have been assiduously engaged in making the survey of the town, and have to-day finished the field work, and shall commence to-morrow the drawing, which will without doubt occupy a week. I rise early in the morning with the dawn, and after breakfasting, start out on foot with a party of five men and trace out the roads leading from the town, each for several miles. In this manner I have been led to stop at many houses, and whenever I find a pretty girl I begin talking Spanish, asking for water, the name of the road, etc., etc. This is purely, I assure you, from a desire to acquire the language, which I find not difficult. I am fully convinced now that if I had only prosecuted my studies under you for a few weeks, and acquired some knowledge of the construction of the language, and of verbs, adjectives, etc., I could speak it in a very short time.

You must not be concerned about the pretty girls, for I will

¹ Brigadier-General Persifor F. Smith, U. S. Volunteers.

frankly confess as yet I have seen but one sufficiently good looking to stop me, and she evinced no disposition to cultivate my acquaintance.

The volunteers continue to pour in, and I regret to say I do not see it with much satisfaction. They are perfectly ignorant of discipline, and most restive under restraint. They are in consequence a most disorderly mass, who will give us, I fear, more trouble than the enemy. Already are our guard-houses filled daily with drunken officers and men, who go to the town, get drunk and commit outrages on the citizens. Head-quarters are unfortunately situated on the bank of the river, just opposite the camp of one of these gallant regiments, but notwithstanding the positive order of General Taylor and of their own officers, that no firing is to be allowed in camp, they come down in crowds to the bank of the river opposite to us and discharge their pieces right across, and the bullets come whizzing by us as thick as in an action, and I really consider spending a day in my tent, uninjured, equivalent to passing through a well-contested action.

There is no use in giving them orders; they will not obey them, and they will in consequence waste more ammunition in a few weeks' idleness at this place than the regulars have wasted since their arrival at Corpus Christi last summer, including both battles. This is the miserable economy of our Government. It will not keep a regular army in proportion to our population and frontier, and equivalent to the wants of the country, for fear of the expense, yet six months of this volunteer force will cost as much as five years for a regular force of equal size.

Had the United States had in service twenty thousand men, instead of five thousand (our present army), it could have sent a force of good, disciplined soldiers, say fifteen thousand, to this country, who would have followed up the results of our victories, and ere this the war would have been finished. As it is, we shall have some twenty or thirty thousand irregulars, whose usefulness may well be doubted, from past experience and present appearances, and at an expense sufficient to have maintained the regular force for many years. However, there is no use in wasting time and paper in arguing a point that must be evident to all rational persons.

The great question is now, What is going to be done? General Taylor, I believe, waits for instructions from Washington, though he is making his arrangements as rapidly as possible to carry out his own plans, in the event of not being instructed.

The papers by the last mail bring us the intelligence of the action of Congress, the President's proclamation, the rumor that thirty thousand men are to be sent here, and some say General Scott to command them. Unfortunately the mail-rider from Point Isabel lost his mail yesterday, and it is said to be the most important mail ever sent to us, as it contains all this information in official documents. Parties have been sent to look for it and I trust it may yet be recovered.

The first thing we have to do is to collect here the means for subsisting a large force, and for transporting their baggage and subsistence into the interior. This will require several steamboats to navigate the river and the purchase of a large number of wagons with mules, and mules to pack.

I send you a little rough sketch of the seat of proposed operations, in order that you may understand what I am writing about.

The various places on the river between this and Mier, namely, Reinosá and Camargo, will have to be occupied and garrisoned. Then from Camargo, or this place, or both, columns can be advanced into the interior and the country occupied to Monterey and Victoria; then an expedition sent to Tampico, and occupying that place, we shall have the whole country to the foot of the Sierra Madre, a chain of mountains beginning at Tampico and extending by Victoria, Monterey, to the Presidio de Río Grande, a town on the river. This occupation, with a strict blockade of both coasts of Mexico, and the gaining of another victory, will bring Mexico to terms. All this will be done in four months, and then, should it please God to spare me through it, I expect to be on my way home.

May 28.

I find by your letter of the thirteenth the alarm had reached Philadelphia, and as a matter of course you were in an unhappy state of anxiety. The papers, as I imagined, have been filled with the most false and exaggerated rumors, rendering our position much more precarious than we ever thought it to be, though I frankly acknowledge we had no reason to anticipate such brilliant success as it pleased Heaven to grant to our arms. We knew the Mexicans were in overwhelming force, had no accurate information of their exact numbers, and though we felt all confidence in our means of resistance, yet the boldest heart was obliged to admit the chances of war might be against us. I never entertained any apprehension

for Point Isabel. At first I considered General Taylor had made a mistake in ever leaving the place without making its defenses complete; but at that time few really believed the Mexicans intended seriously to fight. After we ascertained their determination, which we did on the arrival of General Arista, and the capture of Thornton, then Point Isabel was so far fortified as to render it in my estimation good against the Mexicans, and since we have met them and know their power, I consider it to have been impregnable. *We never were in want of supplies*, always having had an abundance. On the 1st instant, when we left our camp to go to Point Isabel, we had in camp ten days' supplies for the whole army, which could have been spun out into twenty days, by which time the reinforcements would have arrived.

But General Taylor, as well as the whole army, was anxious to try our strength before the volunteers should come, knowing how much our reputation depended on so doing. Indeed, I see the Texans, who, by-the-by, have shown great backwardness in coming to our supposed relief, give as the reason they had whipped five and three to one, and were confident General Taylor could whip a larger proportion. Had we then avoided a conflict, and after circumstances established the ratio that now exists, three to one, we should have been ruined as an army and very probably disbanded. General Taylor therefore left his camp opposite Matamoras, with his army (leaving a regiment and thirty days' provisions for the garrison in the fort), ostensibly for the purpose of bringing back more supplies of ammunition and provisions, but really to give the enemy an opportunity to oppose us if they desired one, and as I wrote you from Point Isabel, on the 3d instant, we were disappointed in not meeting them going down, as we had a small baggage train only and would have been unencumbered in the battle. On our return, when they met us, we had two hundred wagons, which acted as an anchor to us, preventing us from advancing on the field, for fear of leaving the train exposed to attacks in the rear. This it was which compelled us to stand a five hours' cannonading, instead of charging and routing them the first day. This, however, I think I have explained to you before in previous letters. Indeed, I think, with my letters and the official reports, you will be able to understand all about our operations.

I am sure you will, like myself, find in the pleasant excitement of victory and safety ample consolation for previous misery. Such is

war and its terrible consequences. For my part I have no hesitation in saying I have no stomach for it. I trust I shall always do my duty, from a stern sense of the propriety of assisting in the defense of my country, and giving my services to a Government by which I have been supported when there were no risks to run. But I candidly acknowledge I have no penchant for it; nothing but a sense of duty would keep me in it.

Fighting is the least part of the duty, and the least arduous. Look at our little army here. Ever since last August in the field, exposed to the vicissitudes of a trying climate, without proper protection from the weather, or shelter from the storms, harassed and almost broken down by continued marches over a country almost a desert, without wood or water; and in all this time they have only had eight hours' fighting, five one day and three the next. Now what tires the soldier is the previous fatigues and hardships he must endure ere he has an opportunity to repay himself by glory.

Had the Mexicans not attacked us, or had they compromised the question after our arrival, so as to have had no fighting, who would have given us credit for all that you know we have gone through? And how many would have known even that we were here? But a small proportion, I assure you, of those who now are willing to give us credit, and yet in truth I would rather take my chance in four battles than wait a year without any!

Some two thousand volunteers are here already, but they had hardly been on the ground three days before the men began to mutiny at their legitimate duty. Gentlemen from Louisiana, owning plantations and negroes, came here as common soldiers, and then revolt at the idea of drawing their own water and cutting their own wood, and in fact, they expect the regulars, who have to take care of themselves, to play waiters to them.

No, soldiering is no play, and those who undertake it must make up their minds to hard times and hard knocks.

Your letter of the thirteenth I consider a perfect model, and so delighted have I been with the good sense and firmness displayed in it, that I have read it to two or three of my friends in the camp, as showing what a heroine you are, and how rationally you have written, even when your mind was fully alive to all the danger I was in. They all expressed themselves in the most complimentary manner of you, and of your dear father's sound and cool judgment, when all others could see nothing but alarm, perceiving, as it were, with an eagle's

eye the cloud of confused reports and vague rumors, and seizing upon the true state of the case, that we were well supplied with provisions, in fortified lines, and not in any more dangerous position than people always are who are so foolish as to meddle with war and its attendant consequences.

By the time this reaches you, you will be wanting more excitement.

I have also a letter from my good friend Israel Pemberton, whom I am glad to see back in Philadelphia. Tell him I was much gratified with his letter, and shall answer it immediately. In the meantime say John is safe and sound, that he was at Point Isabel, attached to Major Munroe's Company, but on our going down on the 1st instant, he had the good fortune to be transferred to one of the marching companies, and was in both actions, and on the second day, the ninth, was in the advance, which first received the fire of the enemy, and which was the whole time in the thickest of the fight. John had a ball pass through his hat, which castor he will doubtless preserve with care in memory of the day. Say he is well and hearty, in tolerable spirits, but his time all taken up in writing, as he says, *to his girl*, whom he is most desperately anxious to see, a feeling I can readily appreciate and most sincerely sympathize with.

Your friend * * * has been at St. Joseph's Island all the time since we left. *Entre nous*, his day for field-service is past. He has what the wags call "prevaricating veins" in his legs, which prevent him from riding or walking, and he was left at St. Joseph's in charge of the camp women and baggage. Ramsey is in fine health and fine spirits.

The papers by the last mail tell us General Scott is coming, and the President is going to send thirty thousand men. Heaven only knows what they will do with them, or how they are to be subsisted! It will be fine times for the pork merchants in Cincinnati.

The last accounts from Arista are that he has halted about a hundred miles from here and not yet entered the mountains. This may be a ruse of his to attract us in that direction and then get out of our way, as the road he has taken strikes the mountains between Monterey and Tampico, and is badly supplied with wood and water, and is decidedly disadvantageous for us to operate on. In a few days I presume we shall have force enough, and the means of transportation, to commence our march up the river and occupy Reinosá and the Camargo. This latter place will be made the great depot, and our operations carried on from there. I am anxious to be up

there, for the hot season is rapidly approaching, and I believe the higher up you get the healthier it is.

I trust you will keep up your spirits to the last. I really think now that four months will settle the affair with Mexico, unless England sides with her, in which event we shall have a war such as the world has not seen for many years; one of antagonistic principles, in which all the nations of Europe must take a part, and in which every able-bodied man in our country will have to bear his share. If that is coming, the sooner the better, and then it makes but little difference where I am, for I should not be allowed to live quietly with you, and I would just as soon meet British troops on the plains of Tamaulipas as on those of Canada. I trust, however, England has yet too much good sense to enter upon an unnecessary war, one where no point of honor or of vital interest is concerned. She ought to know, however great her temporary success may be, that in the end she must suffer. It is too late in the day to conquer or subdue us. As a people we are rising, and she has arrived at her zenith, and her safest plan is to keep on good terms with us, if she can do so without loss of honor.

CAMP AT MATAMORAS, MEXICO,
June 3, 1846.

Since the date of my last letter but little has occurred worthy of remark. The army still continues quiet in its camp around the town. The volunteers continue to pour in from Louisiana, which State has really exerted herself most handsomely to come to our supposed rescue. I think I mentioned in my last letter that among her Volunteers I had met young Trudeau, the son of the friend of your family. He is the one who was intended by his father for the Navy, at the time of the anticipated French war, and who afterwards studied law in Joseph R. Ingersoll's office. He recollected you perfectly, and seemed quite pleased to meet me. I have met him quite often, and find him very much of a gentleman. Mr. Wise's¹ friend, Bailie Peyton, is also here in command of a regiment, but as his force is not stationed at this place, I have had no opportunity of making his acquaintance.

We have recent intelligence to-day from the Mexican army. It was obliged, from fatigue and other causes, to halt at Linares, a small town at the foot of the Sierra Madre, about half-way between Tam-

¹ Henry A. Wise, brother-in-law of Mrs. Meade.

pico and Monterey. Here an epidemic, in the shape of a typhoid fever, had broken out among them, and one general, a General García, together with a great many men, had died. General Terrejone was said to be dying, and what with disease and desertion the force was reduced from four to one thousand men. It was also reported that, in consequence of the intrigues of Ampudia, Arista had been arrested by the troops and sent to the City of Mexico, upon the charge of having sold them to General Taylor. Another report stated that Arista had arrested Ampudia, on the charge of desertion, on the ninth, and had despatched him to Mexico. We do not know what confidence to place in these reports, but their existence evidently proves the total disorganization of the enemy, and their inability to meet us for some time.

You must not entertain any apprehension for our health, from the reported sickness of the Mexicans. They are but poorly clothed, entirely without protection from the weather, fed only on fresh beef and corn, and marched to death. Such treatment, of course, will break down the hardest troops; and then their surgeons are for the most part quacks, who are unable to give them the treatment their disease requires. The state of affairs with us is quite different. Our men are well fed and clothed, and comparatively protected from the weather. The consequence is that our sick list is quite small, and I trust we shall get through the summer without much disease.

I enclose you the first number of a paper just published in town by a Texan of the name of McLeod, a classmate of mine at West Point, who, on leaving that institution, resigned his commission in the army and went to Texas, where he has figured prominently since as a military man, politician and newspaper editor. I do not know what the general feeling is with regard to his paper in the camp, but for myself, I consider it most pernicious, and were I in General Taylor's place, I would order it stopped. His address to the people will only tend to inflame them against us, and will give an opportunity to Mexico to appeal to foreign nations to rescue her from impending destruction. Now, as his sentiments are simply those of a private individual, unauthorized by the authorities, being written and published and distributed right under the eye of the commanding general, they will be quoted as the opinions of the army and Government of the United States, and used accordingly.

Information has been received of the coming of General Scott, but it is reported he will not be here before September.

June 7.

I send you the second number of the paper established in Matamoras, since our occupation of the town. I think its general tone meets with the disapprobation of the greater portion of the army, but General Taylor does not think it worth while to interfere in such matters, and it is in consequence suffered to go on.

You will see by it that an advanced movement was made to-day, in the marching of two hundred and fifty infantry, sixty wounded men, and two pieces of artillery, to Reynosa, a little town on the river, about sixty miles from here, and about half-way to Camargo, another river town on this side, which is proposed as the main depot of the army, should we advance into the interior. This movement is made with a view of preparing the way for our steamboats (whenever they should reach here) to ascend the river and to clear the country of General Canales and his band of rancheros, who are said to be in the neighborhood of Reynosa, plundering their own people. A few days ago a deputation of the principal citizens of Reynosa waited on the General to ask his protection, inasmuch as the Mexican Government had deserted them, and they were in fear of the Indians. As soon as they had returned home, Canales seized them and threw them into prison, on the plea of their assisting the enemy. We look forward with some eagerness to the arrival of the one thousand mounted Texans called for, as the General will despatch them after Canales as soon as they arrive.

We have received intelligence of the passage of a bill by Congress increasing the army to fifteen thousand men, and, in consequence, a number of officers have been sent from here to various parts of the country to recruit, so as to fill up the ranks. Some of these will go to Philadelphia, among others young Crittenden, of the Fifth Infantry, a nephew of your father's friend, the Senator. I promised to give him a letter to you, but he left before I had written it. I believe he is an excellent young officer, though my acquaintance with him is quite slight; but I should like you to see an officer who had been in both battles, as he could give you a more minute description than I could do by writing.

As I said before, I do not consider General Taylor a very distinguished general—that is to say, professionally—but his success will make him so in the public eye, and the previous reports of anticipated disaster will only serve to add lustre to his victories. His judgment is much superior to General Worth's. Most of the reports

you hear are erroneous. General Taylor did omit to do things which many considered he ought to have done, but which now turn out unnecessary, and I therefore doubt, if the matter had to be gone over, whether any one who pursued a different course would be as successful, for the want of military precautions, for which he is charged, no doubt had their influence in inducing the enemy to meet us in a pitched battle, which of all consummations was the one we most devoutly prayed for. In military matters, as in all things else, success is the grand criterion by which men are judged, and it is evident from the tone of the public press that General Taylor will override all influences brought to bear against him.

I suppose the story of my refusing to be General Worth's Aide arose from my declining to leave the country when he did, and comes from * * *. I can account for it in no other manner, inasmuch as I never was offered the position, and in fact am excluded by "regulations," which confine the appointment of aides to the subalterns of the line of the army. I had many discussions with * * * while he was here, with reference to General Worth and the step he was taking, and told him I considered it most ill-judged, and that it would require all General Worth's previous reputation for gallantry and good conduct to sustain him in it. It is a notorious fact that up to the moment he determined on leaving, he expressed himself openly as confident of a war; but as soon as he had made up his mind to go, he was willing to take General Taylor's opinion that there would be no fighting; and yet you will be astonished to hear that General Taylor used every argument he could to induce General Worth to remain, and even the night before he left the camp sent him some private information he had received of the movement of the Mexicans, and General Worth, after reading it, replied to the staff officer who carried it to him, "Sir, it only confirms me in my previous opinion that your gallant chief is in a most critical situation—more critical than his courageous heart is willing to admit." Still he went off, and after getting to Point Isabel and hearing of Ampudia's threat, he wrote to General Taylor to say, "if his services were of any use to him, he would return." Now, General Taylor, after the course pursued by General Worth, was not going to treat him as a spoiled child, and say one moment, "You may go," and the next, "Oh, you must come back; I cannot get along without you." He left it to the man to act for himself, and said: "I see no necessity for changing my opinion. You asked to go; as a friend I advised you

against the step. You insisted; I then officially gave you permission to retire. I have now nothing further to say, except I see no more *necessity for your return than there was for my withholding permission for you to retire.*" That is to say, I thought when I allowed you to go, I could get along without you, and whether you stay or go is a matter you must decide for yourself. The result has proved we have gotten along without him.

You must blame yourself for this infliction. I should have spared you any allusion to this matter of General Worth, had I not have been incensed by the efforts which I see have been made through the public press to influence opinion in General Worth's case. Hardly a paper about the 20th of May but has some paragraph of what General Worth had said or done, and one would suppose from the papers that he was commanding general, and not General Taylor. Many of them, too, utterly false, and many of them erroneous. For instance, "planting with *his own hands* the American flag on the banks of the Rio Grande" is a misstatement in fact, and willfully made by the person who put it in the papers. The idea is that General Worth was the first man on the river bank, and there planted with his own hands the Star-Spangled Banner, making as it were a *coup de theatre* of it, giving a hint to some patriotic painter for a picture, or for some dramatist for a scene in a national drama; whereas the facts are well known to me, for if you recollect I wrote you that on that day I was in the advanced guard and came near being taken prisoner with the two dragoons, and in point of fact I was the first on the river bank with the advanced guard, who were followed by General Taylor and his staff, General Worth not coming up till his brigade arrived, some time after the cavalry and Ringgold's battery, under Colonel Twiggs, and the first flag planted was by order of Colonel Belknap, commanding the Eighth Regiment of Infantry, who stuck in the ground his regimental flag, which is not the national flag, and this operation was effected by a parcel of dirty and dusty soldiers, with spades and axes. And it was not for an hour after our arrival that a pole was found and the national flag raised on it, and you can readily imagine how easy it would be for General Worth to have done it with his own hands when I tell you the pole was over thirty feet long, and required a big hole to be dug ere it could be sunk, and had to be propped by supports, which operation required some dozen men with spades, axes, etc., etc. So much for fact, and not for imagination. But enough of this; you will see from what I have written what my opinion is.

There are many points in General Worth's character that I admire exceedingly. He is a gallant and brave soldier, but he wants ordinary judgment; he is irritable and deficient in self-command.

As to General Taylor, my feelings towards him are of a friendly nature, though among his most prominent defects is the entire and utter ignorance of the use to which the staff department can be put, and especially my own corps. Did he have his own way, we should be perfectly useless; not from any unfriendly feeling on his part towards us, but from absolute ignorance of what we can be required to do, and perfect inability to make any use of the information we do obtain. He has, however, with him some few officers upon whose judgment he relies, and they every now and then manage to argue him into employing us. Let one fact illustrate this. We arrived at our camp opposite Matamoras on the 28th of March; we broke it up on the 1st of May, remaining there one whole month. During this time, from the commencement to the end, my individual efforts were repeatedly made, as well as were those of other officers, to induce him to reflect upon the subject of bridges, and in the absence of a pontoon train, which Congress was debating about giving us, to call upon his engineer officers for plans for crossing the river with such materials as were at hand. All of us were ready to give our ideas, and to make the necessary preparations and experiments; but, no, the old gentleman would never listen or give it a moment's attention. The consequence was, when the enemy were routed, and the question asked him, could we get over the river, there were no preparations, and we were detained nine days, sending to Point Isabel after planks to make flats, and even then, had not the enemy retired and allowed us to cross with *his own boats*, we should have been twice as long getting over as we were. Here is the General's defect. Had he known how to use his engineers the month we were lying in camp, he would have had us at work experimenting, and when any plan proved successful, had a bridge constructed and put in depot, and then on the tenth, in three or four hours, the whole army, artillery and all, could have been crossed, and the Mexican army prevented from retreating with some twelve pieces of artillery.

This is only for yourself, for I am utterly opposed to telling tales out of school; but at the same time, if you wish to know my opinions, I must refer to facts to sustain them.

General Taylor is a gallant, brave old man, who knows not what fear is. Take him for all in all, however, I repeat what I have before

said, I consider him the best General I have yet served under, and as good as any I know of at present in our service, unless it be General Scott, whom I hope soon to see here, and that he will have an opportunity of trial.

MATAMORAS, June 12, 1846.

I commence my letter to-day on a sheet of paper which was captured with the portfolio of his Excellency, General Arista, and was doubtless designed to bear the news of his anticipated victory to his friends in Mexico. It is the only trophy I have of victory, as all the rest of the captured property, and indeed this, was placed under guard by General Taylor, and no one, officer or private, was allowed to appropriate anything to himself. The stationery found with Arista's baggage he distributed among his staff officers, and I make use of my share to continue my correspondence with you.

We of the army had all congratulated ourselves upon the good fortune which enabled us to secure such complete results without assistance, and we had hoped that the vile insinuations and slanders so lavishly poured upon us by a certain portion of both political parties, and the prejudices which existed in the minds of a large mass of the people against us as a class, would be done away with, and that we might look forward now, at least, to having justice done us. Yet what has been our astonishment and mortification to receive by the last mail information from Washington of the nomination by the President, and confirmation by the Senate, of one whole regiment recently added to the army, in which only *one* officer is taken from the army. This, in the face of a provision to the bill, from the House, raising the regiment, requiring the President to make all the appointments from the army, which provision was stricken out in the Senate, only by the casting vote of the Vice-President.

We did not expect much better treatment from *Colonel Polk*, who is known to be prejudiced against West Point and the army, but the Senate has always stood by us, and you may therefore imagine our mortification to hear it confirmed these nominations *after the news of our services had reached Washington*. To add to the disgust which pervades every bosom among us, is the fact that many of the appointments are of individuals who have been dismissed from the army for gross acts of various kinds, and of others who have been dismissed from West Point for utter inefficiency and incapacity, some having tried and failed twice.

What can a government or country expect of a service that is treated in this manner? Understand me, I have no personal feeling in the matter, for I would not be colonel of the rifles if they offered it to me. But there are many captains who have been twenty years in the service of the Government, doing their duty in all climates and at all times faithfully and promptly, whose claims to simple promotion are thrown aside, and individuals placed over their heads to command them whom, under other circumstances, they would not associate. Now, I do not object to seeing civilians put in the service, and had Mr. Polk appointed the senior grades from the army and the captains, no one would have objected to filling up the subalterns with citizens, and then the regiment might have been expected to be efficient, as the important grades would be filled by individuals supposed to know something of their duties. But as it is, it will take years to make the regiment of any use, as officers as well as men will have to learn their duties. Such is the treatment we receive, and yet we are caviled at if one resigns in disgust.

We have nothing new. All are getting tired of waiting here for boats to send our supplies up the river. There was no preparation made for carrying the war into the enemy's country, and we must wait quietly till it is made. The volunteers have all arrived, except those from Texas, who are coming in daily; but they are not all we want. We must have pork and beans to feed them, and means of carrying the pork and beans and baggage to the points from whence we advance, and from those points into the interior.

Speaking of the conduct of the Administration, and its desire to throw the blame of failure, had it occurred, upon General Taylor, I would observe that General Taylor had not received *one line* from the War Department from the early part of January, when it sent him orders to advance, *up to this date*; and the January communication simply required him to advance to the Rio Grande and take up a position there, which he was to hold. It is true, last summer, he was authorized to call upon the Governors of Mississippi and Alabama for troops, if he required them, but in his last communication of January he was confined to Texas in his call. Now you must know General Taylor is opposed, from experience and a knowledge of their inefficiency, to the use of volunteers, and felt confident that until war was absolutely commenced, it would be better not to have them, and knew, after he got on the ground, that they could not be here in time; and facts have proved so, as none arrived for a month

after they were required, and at this date, six weeks after they were wanted, Texans, to whom his last instructions confined him, have not yet made their appearance. But General Taylor, independent of his consciousness of the inefficiency of irregular troops, always expressed his confidence in the ability of the regulars under his command to maintain the defensive (all the Government asked of him), if his command was only kept up to the standard allowed by law; and he repeatedly and at various intervals called upon the Government to send him recruits and keep him full; and will you believe, notwithstanding his constantly calling its attention to this point, no recruits arrived till just as we were leaving Frontone, and then, of the nine hundred required to fill his command, it sent him *one hundred and twenty-five*, while at the same time it was sending them to St. Louis and other points, where their services could easily have been dispensed with. This, then, is the point I make, that *through the neglect of the Government to answer the call of General Taylor*, made to it *almost monthly* after his arrival at Corpus Christi, we were on the eighth and ninth deficient *eight hundred* men—a force ample in itself to have guaranteed our success under any circumstances. This and its failure to communicate with him, and keep him advised of its wishes, are the causes of complaint against the Government, reasonably entertained by General Taylor; but I think I have given you enough of such matters for to-day.

Yesterday there arrived from New Orleans, a deputation from the citizens of that place, to congratulate General Taylor upon his victories, and also a committee from the Legislature, to give him the thanks of Louisiana, and present him with a sword. The old General received them very courteously, and having been warned of their approach, he had a cold collation prepared, at which, through the influence of champagne and other *spirited* things, many patriotic and complimentary speeches were made. To-day a number of the officers of the army, desirous of testifying their sense of the compliment paid them by the Legislature of Louisiana and citizens of New Orleans, got them up a dinner in town, to which all the volunteer officers were invited, and you may be assured it was a most jolly time. A great quantity of wine was imbibed and an infinite amount of patriotism resulted, besides the most gracious compliments of Volunteers to Regulars and Regulars to Volunteers, etc., etc.

To show you I kept sober, I have added these lines after seeing the affair out. The people in the town were rather surly, and did

not at all like our cheers and toasts, some of them saying we made a great fuss about nothing; but we asked for the laurel-wreaths the ladies were preparing for Arista and his officers, and the triumphal arches that were to have been erected.

June 14.

I forgot to mention in yesterday's letter, that Governor Henderson, with about five hundred mounted Texans, reached here and the Governor paid his respects to the General. I was much pleased with his appearance. You know he married in Paris, Miss Coxe, the niece of Dr. Hewson. He had in his cortege Dr. Ashbell Smith, the great Texan diplomat. Among others whom he brought with him, I was much interested in a young German, Count Blucher, the nephew of the old Field Marshall, who was an editor of a paper (radical) in Berlin, but owing to some articles which met with the disapprobation of the King, he was obliged to fly the country, and in his wanderings found his way to Texas, and came here to see the fighting. He is about thirty years of age, of mild and gentle appearance, an excellent French and Spanish scholar, and said to be, by a gentleman who met him in New Orleans last winter, one of the ripest classical scholars he knew. I had some conversation with him about Texas, in which he expressed the greatest enthusiasm for the country and the wild life you lead in it, but the greatest disgust for the people you are obliged to associate with. He describes them as having all the bad traits of the Spanish and Italian banditti, without their amenity of manners and partial refinement. I fancy his account is very nearly true, and they constitute about the very worst specimen of our population. ✓

We continue in the same state of inaction. In a few days a month will have elapsed since we took possession of the town, and yet no advance, owing to the want of means of transportation. There is fault somewhere, but I do not know to whom to attribute the blame. We now have ten thousand men, and could we establish our depot at Camargo, and get our troops up there, we might be in Monterey in six weeks, and if the Mexicans are disposed to meet us, we should have an opportunity to gain one more victory, which I think would settle the matter.

MATAMORAS, *June 28, 1846.*

It has been nearly two weeks since I have been able to write to you, but I trust the perfect quiet that prevails here will have been reported to you, and that you will not be uneasy on account of my silence. A few days after the date of my last letter (I think the fifteenth) I was ordered to proceed to Reinosá in one of the steamboats, for the purpose of making an examination of the river between this point and that place. We left here on the nineteenth and returned only a few days ago. The expedition was extremely agreeable. I prevailed upon Trudeau, and a young creole on General Smith's staff, by the name of Touchet, to accompany us, making a little party, and as the boat was a good one, clean and comfortable, we managed, when not engaged with our duties, to amuse ourselves in various ways.

We found the river perfectly navigable all the way to Reinosá, and cultivated for nearly the whole distance, one hundred and eighty miles by water. Indeed, on the Mexican side, it was one vast corn field from here more than three quarters of the distance. Upon the other side the land is cleared, and has been under cultivation, but a large portion has been abandoned owing to the frequent depredations and incursions of the Comanche Indians. The soil upon the river bank is exceedingly rich, said by many to equal in fertility the banks of the Mississippi, and to be capable of producing sugar and cotton equal to the production of that rich valley. It is without doubt the finest part of Texas (if it belong to Texas!) that I have seen and I anticipate its being densely populated, one day, when its resources are made available by the establishment of the means of transporting its products to the sea. It has one advantage over the Mississippi Valley, which is its perfect salubrity. No diseases are known here, but such as are incident to all climates; there are no local diseases, none originating from causes only found here. I have seen several persons who told me they came to the river with the chills and fever, which they had brought with them, recovered here, and have never since been troubled with them. The river does not habitually, each year, overflow its banks—that is to say, it has no permanent and regular rises, as the Arkansas, Missouri, and other of our rivers have. It is nothing but a drain or canal, through which the surplus water of the country, caused by rain, springs, etc., passes off. Its rises, in consequence, are very sudden, but the water runs off equally fast. It was quite an agreeable sight in passing up, to see the banks, which

are generally high and firm, covered with fields, extending for miles, with the finest corn I have ever seen, now and then a ranch, or village, in front of which all the inhabitants were collected, staring in stupid wonder at our little boat as she puffed her way up; and when we took off our hats and kissed our hands to the girls, they would all shout and laugh and make themselves most merry.

In Reinosá I was much disappointed. It is a small place, not having at present over six hundred inhabitants, and containing evidences of magnificent designs most meagrely executed. The town is laid out in squares upon a hill of some fifty feet high, consisting of a rotten limestone, which material is used in constructing the houses. These, as in all their towns, are only one story and with square roofs. The walls are made nearly two feet thick, of this spongy limestone, and put together in immense blocks, with a cement of very inferior quality, made from the limestone. About one-half the houses are only half built; of the remainder, a large proportion are tumbling to pieces; so, in fact, though a town of recent date, one would suppose it was a century old from its apparently dilapidated state. Of the people who were in it, we found many agreeable acquaintances. They appeared to be more affably disposed towards us than the population of Matamoras, and the few who called themselves of the better order invited us to their houses and were exceedingly civil. We saw many pretty girls (that is, called pretty here), but with us they would not pass for beauties. But I have been struck with one remarkable fact with regard to the women, and that is the grace and ease of manner they all possess. It is even shown in the way they wear their clothes, always having them nicely made, clean, and gracefully worn. I have often stopped at what is here called a *Labor* (a farm of three or four acres) and asked for a glass of water, when some really pretty girl, with a *reboso* gracefully thrown over her shoulder to conceal her dress (which for comfort is ordinarily worn with the body unfastened and thrown off), with her pretty patterned French calico or printed muslin, the only article I have seen the lower orders wear, well made and fitting perfectly, will hand you a cup of water, in a graceful way that would put to blush many of our finely dressed ladies of the upper ten thousand. I have been struck with their taste in the selection of dresses, shawls, etc. Our merchants who have followed the army brought with them an immense quantity of the Lowell prints and notwithstanding they offer them for less than one-third of the price these people are obliged to give for French

calicos, they cannot sell them, the answer always being they do not like those patterns.

General Taylor has not received a line from the Department since the battles—indeed, I heard him say he had not received a line from it since last January, when it ordered him to the Rio Grande; not even a simple acknowledgement of the receipt of his official reports, though we see by the papers that are now and then brought by vessels bringing over supplies, that his reports have been received, that he has been made a major-general, and owing to the course of General Scott, is to remain in command of the forces operating against Mexico.

My own opinion is that the Mexicans will never disturb us on the river, our present position, but that they will make a stand at Monterey, should we advance into the interior. They will without doubt fortify that place, and it is understood to be capable of strong defense. Then they have a distance of eighty miles to Saltillo, which is a pass through the mountains, capable of being made impregnable if defended by brave and intrepid men, and which it will be difficult for us to force if they defend it properly. But I do not believe it is in the people to resist us as brave men would do, although every effort will be made to arouse their national prejudices and religious feelings against us. If we only had fifteen thousand regular troops, I believe sincerely we could march to the City of Mexico, but I doubt the practicability of so doing with a force of volunteers; for this reason, the regular troops, being disciplined and under the command of their officers, can be restrained, kept in subjection, and the war made a war against the Army and Government of Mexico, and not against the people, who would be left undisturbed in their peaceful vocations as the army passed on. But already have the volunteers commenced to excite feelings of indignation and hatred in the bosom of the people, by their outrages on them. Every day complaints are made, of this man's cornfield being destroyed by the volunteers' horses put into it, or another man's fences being torn down by them for firewood, or an outrage committed on some inoffensive person by some drunken volunteer, and above all volunteers, those from Texas are the most outrageous, for they come here with the sores and recollections of wrong done, which have been festering in them for ten years, and under the guise of entering the United States service, they cloak a thirst to gratify personal revenge. Now it is impossible for General Taylor to restrain these men; he has neither the moral nor

physical force to do it, and my apprehensions are that if we advance with them into the interior, they will exasperate the people against us, causing them to rise *en masse*, and if so there is no telling when the war will end. But if we can restrain them, and prove to the people our desire to let them alone, and only make war on the soldiery and officeholders, one more victory will terminate the affair.

In the meantime should the Oregon question be adjusted, and all hopes of assistance from England directly or indirectly, by her being at war with us, vanish, they will be disposed to treat without further collision.

MATAMORAS, July 9, 1846.

No movement has taken place since my last, but the sending of one regiment of infantry to Camargo, a point on the river some forty miles above Reinosá, and about one hundred by land from this place. A movement of the whole army is contemplated now in a few days, as at last we have ten boats on the river by which we can throw up supplies to Camargo, the point from whence it is intended to advance into the interior.

The settlement of the Oregon question, the news of which was brought by the last mail, will have I think a most important influence on the course of Mexico, as in it she must see the destruction of all her fond hopes of assistance from England; and if it is true that the latter power has offered her mediation, as is reported, I believe, unless the United States are too *exigeante* in their terms, that peace will be made. But I fear this opportunity of acquiring California, either by right of conquest, or in payment of the expenses of the war and of the debts due by Mexico to our citizens, is too good to be lost, and that Mr. Polk will insist upon having upper California, in which event I fear the Mexicans are not sufficiently worsted to induce them to acquiesce. I believe with fifteen thousand regulars, we could go to the City of Mexico, but with thirty thousand volunteers the whole nature and policy of the war will be changed. Already are the injurious influences of their presence perceptible, and you will hear any Mexican in the street descanting on the good conduct of the "*tropas de ligna*," as they call us, and the dread of the "*volontarios*." And with reason, they (the volunteers) have killed five or six innocent people walking in the streets, for no other object than their own amusement; to-be-sure, they are always drunk, and are in a measure irresponsible for their conduct. They rob and steal the cattle and

corn of the poor farmers, and in fact act more like a body of hostile Indians than of civilized whites. Their own officers have no command or control over them, and the General has given up in despair any hope of keeping them in order. The consequence is they are exciting a feeling among the people which will induce them to rise *en masse* to obstruct our progress, and if, when we reach the mountains, we have to fight the *people* as well as the soldiers, the game will be up with us. I have some hope, however, that when we leave this place, which has become a mass of grog-shops and gambling-houses, and march to meet the enemy, the absence of liquor, and the fear of the enemy, may induce a little more order among them and bring them to a better state of discipline.

I suppose the good people of the North are much disappointed at our apparent want of energy and failure to prosecute vigorously the war; so with the volunteers, they are in a state of mutiny because they are not marched right off to meet the enemy. But all these wise people forget that soldiers cannot march or fight unless they have something to eat, and when in a country totally devoid of resources, they must carry with them the means of sustaining physical nature, and in consequence must have the means of carrying their provisions and other supplies. Now, on the 10th of May, the day after we routed the Mexicans, General Taylor had the means of transporting the supplies for three thousand men by land, but not expecting to use the river, as he had been commanded not to insist on its navigation, he of course had no boats, but on that day, when the character of his operations underwent an entire change, and from acting simply on the defensive to maintain a position, he assumed the offensive to carry on a war, upon that day he called for more wagons, and for boats to ascend the river, even then only contemplating the employment of five thousand additional men, and simply the occupying and maintaining possession of both banks of the river. The Government, however, increases his force to thirty thousand men, designs an invasion, floods him with men, without sending the means of subsisting them, or of transporting them and their subsistence.

Now these things should have been anticipated at Washington, and it would have been better for them to have turned their energies to forwarding supplies and means of transportation first, and then sent the men, when everything was ready for their use. This was poor General Scott's idea, and is the correct one. He saw the force could not be made available before September, and properly deemed

it useless for himself and command to be idling their time here waiting for wagons and pork, and had he confined himself in his letter simply to giving his military reasons for not leaving immediately, at the same time saying he would waive them and leave by the next mail, he would have been right, and would have been sustained. But, unfortunately, he chose to ascribe political reasons to what, I believe, was simply military ignorance on the part of Mr. Polk; and this, with his "hasty plate of soup," has ruined him forever, for it is much better in this country for a man to commit a gross crime than to make himself ridiculous; the former he may get over, the latter, never.

But now, as I told you before, we have ten boats (after waiting two months for them), and the General will employ them in throwing supplies into Camargo, and will in a few days move the whole army up to that point, except such portions as are necessary to garrison the depots at this and other places.

Camargo is one hundred miles from here, and the roads are very bad, owing to recent rains. It will therefore take to the 1st of August before the army will be concentrated there. Then the means of transporting from that point to Monterey, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, the supplies for a column of eight or ten thousand men will have to be collected there, and various preparations made, which will consume some weeks, so that I hardly think the advance from Camargo will be made before the latter part of August.

In the meantime I shall probably be occupied in making reconnoissances of the roads and country between Camargo and Monterey, in advance of the army. Since my last letter, Captain Williams, of the corps, has arrived, to act as Chief Topographical Engineer, and a young lieutenant by the name of Pope¹ is also ordered here. This will make, with Mr. Wood and myself, four officers, of whom I shall be the second in rank. Four others have been sent, I understand, with Colonel Kearney, from St. Louis to Santa Fe, namely, Emory, Warner, Peck and Abert. This makes eight officers of the corps in the field.

I suppose you are aware a large cavalry force is being collected at San Antonio de Bexar, which is to be under the command of General Wool, and they are to march from San Antonio to Chihuahua, a large town of fourteen thousand inhabitants, on the highroad from

¹ Lieutenant John Pope, of the Topographical Engineers, afterward major-general U. S. Vols., Civil War.

the City of Mexico to Santa Fe, so that the occupation of Monterey, Chihuahua and Santa Fe will give us actual possession of the whole of New Mexico.

I have been given to understand at headquarters that there will probably be one or two Topographical Engineers sent to General Wool from this command; in which case I shall certainly be one, for Captain Williams will remain with General Taylor, and I coming next, will have the claim to the independent position, and, if two go, to the command of the assistant who is sent. Of course I would rather be first than second of my corps, and without doubt the expedition to Chihuahua will be agreeable, as it is represented as being one of the finest cities in Northern Mexico; but still I would prefer remaining with General Taylor, as he will see the fighting if any more is to be done. The expedition to Chihuahua will doubtless be effected without opposition from the Mexicans, though General Wool may meet with the Indians.

I shall, however, adopt the course in this instance which I have always taken, of expressing no wish or feeling in the matter, but obeying with alacrity any order that may be given me. They may send officers from Washington to General Wool, which would obviate the necessity of any going from here, or the General may find he has occupation for all of us with him. Time alone will show. As it is we (the Topographical Engineers) are all going to Camargo in a day or two, to commence the exploration of the country between there and Monterey.

I note with pride and pleasure the good opinion of my epistolary powers, which your dear father and others have been pleased to express, and also your request that I should keep a journal, if I have not done so. I have not kept a journal, or any memoranda but my letters to you. What your father says is very true—that war will be a matter of history, and the day may come when the evidence of the most humble participator in it may be of importance in elucidating some disputed point. Still, I do not think I could ever bring myself to the point of writing a book, and should feel something like the old General, who, when he was told a delegation from the Legislature of Louisiana had arrived to deliver to him a sword, observed he would rather go through another battle than make a speech in reply to them. When the occasion came, I assure you the old man was a great deal more excited and embarrassed than at any period of the action.

I cannot express to you how thankful I am you refused John Cadwalader's¹ request to publish my letter, and I have mentioned your good sense and prudence with great pride throughout the camp. It is the more appreciated, as many good people similarly situated have not exercised the same discretion, and many letters have been published which their authors would have given a great deal to have *revised* before meeting the eyes of their brother officers. Instances of individual valor which were never known before the letters came here in the papers, extraordinary feats performed by persons who were never near the reputed scene of action, and all kinds of lies and absurdities have been sent forth, the poor devils writing them supposing they would only be seen by their friends, and these little white lies, induced by their vanity, pass undiscovered. Another set wrote what they believed to be true, but in giving their accounts of the actions have run counter in their impressions to the impressions of others, so as to have raised in the army a number of cliques, each having its individual hero. Now, though I wrote you nothing but the truth, and what I saw myself, yet as it is impossible on a field of battle for any one man to see and know everything, many things escaped me, and had my letter been published and reached here, many who are now my good friends would have abused me for having omitted to mention their extraordinary services. Indeed, of the mass of letters I know of but one which has met with anything like approbation, and I am therefore over-rejoiced at your good sense in withholding mine. If there is anything I do dislike, it is newspaper notoriety. I think it is the curse of our country, and fear it is seriously injuring our little army, whose tone once was utterly opposed to making use of the public press to sustain their cause.

As to my name being mentioned in General Taylor's report, I think your expectations were altogether too high, and you deserved to be disappointed. When you reflect that of nearly two hundred officers only some twenty-five were mentioned, you must certainly acknowledge it a compliment. And the very fact of its being brought to your notice by so many persons proves that it was a compliment of no small value. Now, I did nothing but my duty, which did not require that I should charge batteries, or shoot Mexicans, or place myself in any position where I could display extraordinary personal valor, and I am only mentioned because, being near the person of

¹ John Cadwalader, of Philadelphia, afterward judge of the U. S. District Court.

the General, and having performed my duty, it was only by his mentioning me that the simple fact would be made known.

Still, I consider it a distinguished compliment, quite undeserved on my part; for there were many equally entitled with myself to it who are not known except to their few personal friends as having been in the action; whereas, all over the country and in Europe, wherever I should have an acquaintance, they will know by this report, at least, that I was in both actions, and that appears to be a great deal nowadays, and is indeed a fact of which I do not hesitate to say I am exceedingly proud.

MATAMORAS, *July 16, 1846.*

Obstacle after obstacle presents itself to us, so that it is impossible to calculate when we shall even move. At first we had no boats or provisions to throw forward. Now, when the boats have come, the river rises to its maximum height, overflows the whole country above and below, cuts off all communication by land even, from here to Point Isabel, and occupies nearly all the boats in bringing up here the crowds of men sent by the Government, and the provisions necessary to feed them. Just as we are getting boats enough to perform this duty, and take up provisions to Camargo, it rains as if heaven and earth were coming together, and renders the road from here to that point impassable, forcing us to send the troops by water, which will be the work of months, as one boat can only take half a regiment at a time. Add to all this that the Secretary of War sends an order declaring all the troops called out by General Taylor, who enlisted for more than three months (that is to say for six), as illegally enlisted, the law only allowing an enlistment of three months, and requiring them to be disbanded at the expiration of their term of service. Here, then, is the whole force that General Taylor has been relying on for his forward movement—namely, the troops from Louisiana, Texas, St. Louis and Louisville—taken at once from him, and he obliged to delay his movements till the twelve-months' men shall arrive here and be sent to Camargo. So that I do not see how we are to leave Camargo, to advance into the enemy's country, till late in the fall.

Again, I had some hopes from the mediation of England, and trusted the United States would be willing to make peace; but from information received by the last mail, I fear Mr. Polk is not very anxious for peace, and that his demands upon Mexico will be such

that she will prefer trying her fortune in battle once more before she yields. I refer to the fact that troops are being sent to California by sea, round Cape Horn, a voyage of six or eight months' duration. Now, either Mr. Polk presumes the war will continue that length of time, or he is determined to have California, as one of the terms of peace, and these troops are to take possession of it in case of war, and to garrison it in the event of peace having been made before they reach there.

I do not think Mexico has been led to feel our power sufficiently to induce her to dismember herself, and that we shall have to whip her much more than we have done, before she will consent to yield to terms so hard as these. So that I fear we shall be compelled to advance into the country—and pretty far into it, too—before we can look for anything like a definite termination to this state of things.

POINT ISABEL, *July 24, 1846.*

Since I last wrote you (on the 16th instant) I have been directed to come here in search of some public property which Captain Williams desired to obtain immediate possession of. I came down the river on a small steamboat, with nine hundred men on board—a regiment of volunteers from Louisiana, who had served their three months, and declined remaining for twelve more, which has been the decision of the Government.

Eight thousand men are in this position, called out by General Gaines for six months, and the Government now decides that volunteers cannot be called out for a greater period than three months, unless by Special Act of Congress, and has directed that this force, at the end of their three months, is to be disbanded, unless it chooses to serve for nine months, making a year. As a matter of course, they all decline, so that we shall have to transport these eight thousand men out of the country, and they have just been here three months, to eat up two hundred and forty thousand rations; and our means of transportation, so necessary for us to throw our troops and supplies up to Camargo, are taken to carry these people to a point where they can get shipping. And this is the way everything is being done, affording every day stronger practical illustration of the utter unfitness of our Government for carrying on a war of invasion.

Indeed, so irregular and undisciplined is the force sent here that I shall be surprised if I ever find myself at Monterey; for I really do not see how General Taylor can carry on operations with a force which

he cannot depend upon for doing the slightest thing for itself. A regiment cannot move its camp eight or ten miles, without incurring the risk of starving; for though furnished with wagons and ample means of transportation, they will overload their wagons with baggage and sutler's goods, and leave their provisions, thinking this a clever trick by which they will force the Government officers to send on their provisions by extra transportation. The consequence is they arrive at their new position, and the next day they have nothing to eat, and then complain of the regular officers. Everything, in consequence, connected with these people is one mass of confusion, and I do not believe they ever will be taught to take care of themselves, and of course our operations will be proportionately impeded.

I came down the river with Captain A. Slidell McKenzie, who came here in a vessel of war, direct from Havana, went to see General Taylor, with whom he remained closeted for some hours, and is now on his way to Washington. It is supposed his mission has some connection with Santa Anna, but upon this point he is silent. He, however, makes public the intelligence that California has declared itself independent of Mexico, and thrown herself upon the protection of the United States. This is but the first move in the game I have long since anticipated. We learn, moreover, that a regiment of infantry is to go out in the "North Carolina" (74) to California, other troops having preceded them. We are then to have California at all hazards, and Mexico, I am sure, will never yield this point until she is forced so to do. I look, then, for a long war—at least for no speedy adjustment of our difficulties, unless England should advise Mexico to yield to our requirements.

By the blessing of God I continue in excellent health, and trust this will be continued. The army is in excellent health, considering its exposure and the nature of the climate. I do not think the number of sick is greater than it would be were we encamped at the North.

MATAMORAS, *July 30, 1846.*

I returned to this place yesterday, very glad, I assure you, to get away from the immense crowd of volunteers, that was overcrowding everything and everybody at the mouth of the river. I was truly delighted to find on my arrival your letters from the 2d to the 14th of July. At length you have received some of my letters, and appear in better spirits.

I regret I have nothing new to tell you. Most of the regulars have gone up to Camargo, and the General proposes to start in two or three days. I shall accompany him. I suppose we will be detained some time at Camargo, organizing the army and making preparations for our march into the enemy's country. At the last accounts they had no reinforcements at Monterey, and only had the wreck of the army they had there, which was assiduously engaged fortifying the place. I am in hopes Paredes will be able to raise an army and reach Monterey before we do, and let us have our fight there, instead of farther in the interior. I think the war will not end till we give them another drubbing, and if we succeed in doing that, then they will probably come to their senses and make terms. This appears to be the opinion of the most intelligent Mexicans here, that Paredes will make a great effort to raise a large army to meet us, and in the event of his being defeated, he will lose his power, and some of his rivals will come into power, who will make terms with us. Should this prove true, the sooner the battle takes place the better.

Two French painters have arrived from New Orleans to collect materials for painting the battle of the ninth. They have been taking the likenesses of all the principal individuals in the action, and as one of General Taylor's staff, they took mine, that is a simple pencil sketch. I could not recognize it myself, nor do I suppose any one else could, as it put me in mind of the "Herald's" wood-cut of the Prince de Joinville. However, I suppose it is a great honor to be put in a picture in any way, and perhaps one of these days, when you see it, you will see on the directing card: "No. 15, Lieut. Meade, Top'l Eng's." They propose making a large picture and hope to sell it to Congress or some public institution.

MATAMORAS, *August 3, 1846.*

The General has determined to go up to Camargo by water, and starts on the first boat; but Captain Williams, preferring to go by land, has obtained his permission to accompany a command that leaves to-morrow, consisting of four companies of infantry and a battery of artillery. Of course I go with Captain Williams, and shall therefore leave to-morrow morning before sunrise. I should have preferred myself going by water, as I would avoid riding in the hot sun, but in other respects the land journey will be the most pleasant, as the boats are dirty and uncomfortable and all filled with troops.

We have no news. You will have doubtless seen before this

reaches you, the intelligence brought by the "Princeton," which brings our dates up to the 10th inst., at the City of Mexico. The Congress had authorized Paredes to prosecute vigorously the war, but furnished him with no means, nor had they taken any steps to raise any means for him. He on his part was afraid to leave the City of Mexico. No troops had been raised, and there was difficulty in getting generals to lead them, after the treatment Arista had received. This is confirmed by our advices from Monterey, which state there are only two thousand five hundred men there, and no certain intelligence of any approaching. From this it is not improbable they may allow us to occupy Monterey without opposition, but I cannot think the war will be ended without more fighting, and I therefore dislike to see it put off.

REINOSA, *August 10, 1846.*

We arrived here to-day on our March to Camargo, and I seize the opportunity afforded by a few hours' halt to send you some account of my movements.

We left Matamoras on the 5th inst., but in consequence of the state of the roads near the river, we had to make a long detour to reach this place, making a march of over ninety miles, when the straight road is not more than sixty. As is always the case, this march has improved me very much. I was beginning to feel the effects of lying idle at Matamoras, but now I am as well as possible, notwithstanding our first two days' march was through the rain, and the last in the burning sun, with often a space of sixteen miles without water.

The country we came over was rather monotonous, the early part being a level prairie; but the last day we came over a rolling limestone country that was exceedingly agreeable to our eyes, seeing the first undulating country I had seen since I left the United States.

We leave this afternoon for Camargo, and expect to reach it in three days.

IN CAMP NEAR CAMARGO, MEXICO, *August 13, 1846.*

We arrived here early this morning, after having marched nearly one hundred and twenty miles in eight days, which, when you consider the climate and the season of the year, is doing pretty well. The last few days the heat was so intense in the middle of the day, that we were obliged to get up at twelve o'clock at night, and finish our day's march before eight o'clock in the morning. As we had a

moon, this was readily effected, and I presume will be the plan adopted hereafter in marching to Monterey, for we find this upper country very much hotter than it was at Matamoras. The sun, if anything, is more powerful, owing to a great quantity of limestone, which reflects the heat, and then we are without the delightful breeze which kept us comfortable below.

Camargo is a small place, but little larger than Reinosá, containing, I should suppose, some three thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the river San Juan, some three miles from its junction with the Rio Grande. Though placed on very high ground, so great are the freshets that the San Juan is subject to that a few months ago nearly one-third of Camargo was destroyed by a rise in the river. The people are, in consequence, in a great state of destitution, most of them living in the open air and almost starving. Our arrival, therefore, has been a perfect windfall to them, as, what with washing, selling milk, and other eatables, cutting grass for our horses, and a thousand other things, they manage to pick up a great deal of money, and are thus reconciled to our presence. Indeed, the authorities express themselves delighted, and hope we will retain possession of the country. They have promptly supplied all our requisitions for mules, cattle for beef, etc., etc., and have with equal promptitude refused the requisitions of their own Government for similar articles, and for men.

We do not hear as much at this place from Monterey as we did at Matamoras, from all I can learn. They appear to have been unable to reinforce the regular troops at Monterey, but they have made extraordinary exertions in turning out the militia, and it is said they have collected seven thousand men of this description of force. The more they have of these fellows, the better for us, for it is well known they will run at the first shot, and will prove no obstacle to our advance. They have only two thousand five hundred regulars, the remains of Arista's army. They are said to be fortifying the place, but I have no apprehensions of their engineers; they proved themselves of no account at Matamoras, where their work was of the most miserable description. As for ourselves, we have now collected here three thousand regulars, and about two thousand volunteers; the latter are arriving in numbers daily from below. A reconnoitering party has gone out to examine the roads, and upon its return I understand it is General Taylor's intention to commence the advance movement by throwing forward a brigade of regulars to some point

about one-third the distance, where it is proposed to establish a depot for the supply of the main army on the march.

Opinions are again becoming contradictory as to the reception we are to meet with at Monterey, many thinking they will make a desperate stand then, others that we shall occupy the place without a shot. My own opinion is, that they will make a stand at some point of our march, and that point will be fixed by their ability to reinforce their people at Monterey. If Paredes can throw into Monterey a large force of regulars before we reach it, they will fight there; if not, those that are now there will retire before us, till they meet the army from the interior, and give us battle at some favorable point, after they have effected a junction. I do not join in the general opinion of their carrying on a desperate guerilla war. Though descended from the Spaniards, they are a very different race from the hardy mountaineers of Spain. Their mixture with the Indian and negro race, and the effect of climate enervating them, render them a listless race, destitute of the energy necessary for a war which is solely one of enterprise. Then again, the people in the interior are ignorant, utterly so, of the use of arms, the Government having prohibited their keeping them, from the fear of their being used against it. Indeed, it is universally conceded that their most warlike provinces are these we are now occupying, where the necessity of defending themselves against the Indians, and latterly the Texans, has compelled the Government to allow them arms, the use of which they have acquired; and yet, when we lay opposite Matamoras for a month, and they had, besides their regular force, some two thousand rancheros, they never even attempted any enterprise against us, though we afforded them all the opportunities it was possible to give them. From hence I infer that in the interior we shall meet with no such determined resistance from the people; and as to their regular soldiers, they are no better fitted for guerilla fighting than are ours. My only apprehensions as to success arise from the constitution of our own force. I fear our volunteers will not only prove inefficient themselves, but will prove a serious obstacle to our efficiency, by impeding our progress. I fear the glory we have acquired at the Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma will be somewhat dimmed by our apparently tardy operations succeeding them. People who are accustomed to read of campaigns in Europe and elsewhere, where armies march over thickly settled countries, producing all that is required for the subsistence of the army, and where towns are daily occupied for

quarters for the troops, and hospitals for the sick, are unable to comprehend the obstacles to be surmounted by an army obliged to march three hundred miles over a country which, as far as supplies are concerned, is a perfect desert, forcing it to carry everything with it, in the shape of supplies, ammunition, medical stores, quarters, hospitals, and even the food for the animals, necessary to transport these things. Then reflect that after these two battles (now three months since), not the slightest preparation had been made in anticipation of offensive operations, that boats had to be sent for to New Orleans, six hundred miles distant, that these boats, mere shells made to run on rivers, had to be brought six hundred miles over a tempestuous sea, that all the provisions had to be purchased in New Orleans, that wagons had to be *made in Ohio*, because they were not to be found in New Orleans, that mules had to be purchased from the enemy; and while all this was being done, some twenty thousand men were rushing into the country, who not only consumed supplies as fast as they arrived, but had to be taken care of, as you would so many children. Already have they in almost every volunteer regiment reported one-third their number sick, and in many cases one-half the whole regiment, and I fear the mortality will be terrible among them, from their utter ignorance of the proper mode of taking care of themselves. This large number of sick is a dead weight upon us, taking away so many men as hospital attendants, requiring quarters, etc.; and if taken sick on the march, requiring transportation in wagons or on litters; all these things tell in the long run, and I mention them to vindicate General Taylor from the charges I see the Union is bringing against him, of want of energy, and not pursuing properly his victories.

He has been and is most anxious to move, but the credit he has already acquired renders him the more determined to move in an efficient manner, and not in such a way as to render his movements of no avail. Loud complaints are being made against him here also, by the Texans and other volunteers, vociferously demanding to be led forward, and criticising his slow movements, calling them scientific, saying it is all nonsense to take such a quantity of supplies, we ought to live on fresh beef, of which the country is full, as they, the Texans, always did, they never carried wagons and such things. True enough, but what was the result? Why, when they met the enemy, one hour's fight *exhausted* all their *ammunition*, and they had to retire, and when they retired, they abandoned their sick and

wounded on the field. And, if a man was taken sick on a march he was left, to join them if he could get well, if not, to die alone in the midst of the prairie; and if the enemy, as they often did, previously drove the cattle away, then, after starving for some days, they had to come back, because there were no cattle in the country; and after they took a place, they had to abandon it in a few days, because they had no means of holding it. In fact, their war, was simply a series of badly designed and worse executed forays, gaining no point, and causing them, with all their boasted valor and skill, to leave for ten years the whole of this frontier in the hands of the Mexicans. This is not our plan. When we advance it is for some object, and we shall have the means of holding every advantage we gain, of taking care of our people en route and in depots, and being enabled to fight several battles before our ammunition gives out. But to do this, preparations must be made, and preparations require time in every country, but most particularly in this. The Government is to blame for not making the preparations before it sent the troops, and what General Scott told it is now fully verified, "that nothing could be done before September."

The Commanche Indians, the other day, made a descent upon Mier, a town some thirty miles above here, butchered the women and children, carried off young girls, and committed all sorts of depredations. A command was immediately sent after them, but did not overtake them. The command, unfortunately, were Texans, the only mounted force then here, and would you believe it, these fellows sustained the Indians, and said they were our allies and we were wrong in endeavoring to punish them for their conduct towards our enemies, even though it did outrage all the laws of civilized warfare, and from what had recently transpired, it is feared that the Indians have been incited to this act by people bearing the title of American citizens! They have recently (the Indians) made a treaty of peace with us, and it is rumored that at that treaty they were informed of the war with Mexico, and that Mexicans were our enemies; then hearing of the two battles, and knowing of the defeat of the Mexican troops, they had come here to plunder and murder, thinking we would uphold them in it. But the General is determined to punish them if he can get hold of them, and to give them to understand they must keep in their territory. The effect upon the Mexicans would be most injurious of the toleration of such acts, as it would arouse in them a feeling of indignation at our employing Indians; but if, on

the contrary, we chastise them, the effect will be most beneficial, as it will prove the Indians are not our allies, and that we can protect the Mexicans from them, which their own Government had never been able to do.

CAMARGO, MEXICO, *August 18, 1846.*

I have been this morning ordered to accompany General Worth, who leaves to-morrow with the advance of the army, to establish a depot at Seralvo, a small town about half-way between this and Monterey. I am, of course, very much gratified at again being in the advance, always considered the most honorable position.

You might think from what I have written of General Worth, that being on his staff would not be so agreeable as remaining with General Taylor, and such indeed is the case; but the arrival of Captain Williams precludes my having the same position with General Taylor as before, since he occupies it, and I am quite gratified to change it for a position on General Worth's staff, where, as far as my own corps is concerned, I shall be the head.

We leave to-morrow. Seralvo is some sixty miles distant, and is said to be, by those who recently visited it on a reconnoitering party, delightfully situated, in a rolling country, with delicious cold water running from the hillsides, and abundance of fruit of all kinds. I have to leave here all my baggage except my little valise and my bed—I even go without my tent—for our only means of transportation are pack-mules, and we have to reduce everything to the minimum.

Of course the army will be concentrated before we reach Monterey. We are only a detachment (about one thousand) sent in advance, to take possession of this point, to which provisions, etc., will be sent for the supply of after columns.

I sincerely trust that our advance movement will be but the beginning of the end, and that we shall soon have an opportunity of showing these people our determination to push this war, and hence induce them to come to terms.

I see, by Sir Robert Peel's speech, that England did offer her mediation, and therefore presume it has been declined by Mr. Polk.

As to the contemplated attack on the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, I very much fear it will be a failure, if the Mexicans make a stout resistance. I never believed in the ability of fleets to take fortifications, though the navy always expressed its confidence of success, until it became necessary for it to attempt it. I think now it would

be more prudent, as far as success is concerned, to have a combined attack by land and water. I understand there is a hill just back of Vera Cruz, which commands the castle, and is only three-quarters of a mile distant. A battery of heavy guns placed here would render most effectual assistance in subduing the place.

SERALVO, MEXICO, *August 28, 1846.*

We arrived here two days ago, after a very pleasant march of some six days from Camargo. We neither saw nor heard anything of the enemy, though we are now sixty miles in the interior, and about half-way to Monterey.

This place is situated just at the foot of the first range of mountains, and is prettily placed in the valley of a mountain stream, which, as it is pure, cool water, we esteem a great luxury. The people have received us most kindly—indeed, the authorities, after General Worth had given them an official letter, informing them of his intention to occupy the town, as part of a conquered country, and in consequence should expect from them supplies of various kinds, for all of which prompt payment in cash, at fair prices, would be made, and the whole town turned out and brought us grass, wood, corn, flour, and everything that was asked for, cheerfully.

We found here, in the possession of the Alcalde, a paper from the City of Mexico of the 6th of August, making known that the revolution, which had broken out two months previously at Guadalajara, had extended to the city itself, and on that day the troops of the garrison had declared for Santa Anna, and Paredes was no longer in power. Santa Anna will, of course, return now, but what his course will be is as yet in doubt. My impression is that either he will at once propose terms and make peace, or he will set himself energetically to work to prosecute the war; and as he is the master-spirit of this country, far beyond all others in talent and resources, should he adopt the latter course, we may look for a long and severely contested war.

I trust, however, he will have the good sense to see the inutility of his country struggling against the United States, and as he will find it in a state of distraction, requiring all his ability to put it in such a condition as to make certain his power, he will yield to the influence of England and propose such terms as Mr. Polk will consider acceptable.

We have now here some nine hundred men, with a battery of artillery. Fifteen miles from us is another detachment of six hun-

dred, with another battery, and in rear of them, at various intervals, are stationed brigades, on the road to Camargo; so that in a day we might concentrate a force of several thousand here, which number is sufficient for a defensive attitude, in the event of our hearing of the advance of the enemy.

Our latest intelligence (three days from Monterey) is to the effect they have received no accession of force, though it was reported Ampudia, with three thousand men, was marching from San Luis Potosi, and would be in Monterey in the course of four or five days. Should this prove true, it would give them at that point a regular force of between five and six thousand men, and a large irregular force, and with the works they have erected around the town, they may be induced to offer resistance.

I have been agreeably disappointed in my service with General Worth, having been treated with all possible courtesy and kindness, and I hope I shall remain with him so long as he is in the advance.

SERALVO, MEXICO, *September 3, 1846.*

As to hostilities, our latest intelligence would lead us to believe we may expect to meet with resistance at Monterey. We have undoubted information (indeed I have seen a paper from the City of Mexico announcing the fact) that on the 6th of August a revolution of the soldiery took place in the city, dispossessing Paredes of the Government, and recalling Santa Anna. This individual, it is said, made his appearance at Vera Cruz on the 17th ultimo, and is now at the head of affairs, with the avowed intention of prosecuting vigorously the war against us. From Monterey we learn that, four days ago, Ampudia (placed in command by Santa Anna) had arrived, with two thousand men and four pieces of artillery, and that large reinforcements were daily expected, and they expressed their determination to meet us before we reached the town, in order to spare it. All this is report, except the arrival of reinforcements, which we know to be a fact. It has always been my opinion that they would make a stand at Monterey, if they obtained reinforcements, and I therefore expect we shall have to take the place by force of arms; but I do not anticipate its being a very difficult affair, from all I can learn of their preparations. As to their coming out to meet us, I cannot believe them so foolhardy; it would be too much good fortune for us, as our success would be beyond a doubt.

On our own part our movements continue as tardy as ever.

General Taylor has determined to march on Monterey with between six and seven thousand men, all his regulars and some picked volunteers. The remainder of the volunteers are to be left at Camargo, under General Patterson,¹ and are to be sent for as soon as we reach any part of the country where an increased force can be subsisted. The movement has commenced from Camargo, and we are daily expecting the arrival of the next division of regulars, when we will be pushed on in advance.

Unfortunately for us we have had some very heavy rains in the last few days, which have so swollen some of the streams on the road as to delay the march of the troops till they subside, and I fear it will be some weeks before we shall be at Monterey. I say, I fear, not that I am over-anxious to have any more fighting, for, God knows, I have seen enough, and am perfectly willing to forego any additional glory; but if we have the thing to do, the sooner it is over the better for all hands. And if Santa Anna has returned with the intention of prosecuting the war, we may make up our minds to having to whip them severely before they come to terms, and having this to do, my wish is that as little time as possible should intervene, and as little distance as possible be marched over before this consummation is brought about.

We are all in fine spirits and most anxious to move on.

SERALVO, MEXICO, *September 11, 1846.*

We have now collected at this point the army intended to operate against Monterey. It consists of—

Eight regiments of regular infantry	2500	men.	
Four regiments of volunteer infantry	2000	“	
Four batteries of light artillery	280	“	{ each, four 6-pounders.
One battery of heavy artillery	100	“	{ Two 24-pounders, Howitzers and one heavy mortar
Two squadrons of regular cavalry	200	“	
One squadron of volunteer cavalry	150	“	
Two regiments of volunteer cavalry	1000	“	
Total	6230	men	

¹ Major-General Robert Patterson, U. S. Vols.

In addition, there are between four and five hundred men attached in various ways, such as teamsters, hospital attendants and others, most of whom are armed, and will swell our force at a pinch to seven thousand men, in round numbers.

I have just returned from a reconnoissance of the road in advance of this place. I proceeded thirty miles, when we came within a mile of a cavalry force of the enemy, amounting to eight hundred. It was in the middle of the night, we having ridden very hard to endeavor to surprise them; but upon reaching this point, we found, from the peasantry, that two couriers had passed in advance of us, who knew of all our movements, and even stated our number, eighty strong. Finding them prepared for us, we drove in their pickets, and awaited their pursuit; but the cowardly rascals were afraid to come after us, and not being strong enough ourselves to attempt to attack them, we returned to camp unmolested. To-morrow I go forward in advance of the army with a strong working party and escort, to repair the road previously examined. The army will commence their march the next day, and in ten days from now we shall know whether Monterey is ours, by hard knocks or not. I understand General Taylor thinks there will be no fighting, and he probably has sources of information beyond mine. At any rate, above you have my opinion, which is condensed, that the question turns, first, on the necessity Santa Anna may find himself under to continue the war; upon this turns the question of war or peace; and, secondly, in case of war, his ability to collect a force to resist us, upon which will depend the point where we may expect to fight. Under any circumstances, a few months must now decide the matter. We are in motion with six thousand five hundred men. At Camargo, on the river, some one hundred and forty miles in rear of Monterey, we leave a reserve of eight or ten thousand men. We have all the means of transportation we can expect to get, and there is no obstacle to our onward progress, but such as the enemy will present. Should we defeat them, as I feel confident we will, I think one battle will induce them to yield, as it will take them some time to reassemble another army, during which time we shall be advancing towards their capital. Our people are in fine condition and spirits, and I think will give a good account of themselves should the enemy be kind enough to give us the opportunity. Still, the impression of the majority is there will be no fight, and odds are offered on this. You may probably have heard of peace when this reaches you, in which event, of course you will have all your anxiety removed.

And now as to the subject of brevets mentioned in your last letter, in which you appear mortified at my having been passed over. You doubtless remember I told you I expected nothing of the kind, and consequently am not disappointed. I understand General Taylor did me the honor to name me for promotion on his long list, the one considered too large to send to the Senate; but I was always aware that the nomination of the commanding general was one thing, and the nomination by the "President" another, the one requiring hard service, the other political influence, the curse of our country. If I had strong Locofoco friends at Washington, to back the nomination of General Taylor, I might have hoped to have been rewarded; but on its absence, my claims will meet with no attention. But, in truth, I have but little claim as far as the two battles are concerned. On those days I did my duty, and my duty simply. Opportunities were wanting—and, in fact, seldom occur to staff officers—to perform brilliant feats, such as ensure promotion; but if most faithful attention to those duties for nearly a year preceding, and activity and energy such as (though I say it myself) have attracted attention from various officers, entitle me to the advancement of one grade, an empty honor which brings neither rank nor profit with it, then I can safely appeal to my brother-officers for my credentials in this case.

I write this to you to whom, without incurring the charge of vanity, I can speak of my own services. I can safely say I am pretty much the only officer of my own corps who has done anything, and that, by the blessing of God enabling me to keep in good health, I have been actively employed ever since my arrival at Corpus Christi, this time last year. Therefore, on the ground of meritorious services, I have some claim, and this added to my position on the eighth and ninth (it being customary to promote the staff of a successful general, when they have anything in them to deserve it), would have prepared me not to be surprised, had they thought proper to advance me one grade; but as I said before, knowing how these things are done, I was fully prepared for my not being noticed.

I suppose you know I am simply a Second Lieutenant, and one grade would only have made me a First Lieutenant, bringing no additional consideration or emolument; but it would give me the opportunity, in case of further active service, to reach the next grade, of Captain, which would be of essential importance to me; and besides, it is a public testimonial of your merits, at all times grateful to yourself and friends.

There is much heart-burning in the army at the list confirmed,

and the advancement of some officers, two grades, is considered as most unjust; but I think the list confirmed is most remarkably just, and am surprised, knowing the difficulty of selection, that so few mistakes were made.

CAMP NEAR MARIN, MEXICO, *September 17, 1846.*

I have had no opportunity to write to you since the date of my last (I think on the eleventh), for we have been ever since marching, and only halt at this point to give time to the rear to close up. You will doubtless see in the papers all about our march and the dispositions made.

On the twelfth the pioneers, about ninety strong, with one hundred cavalry and twenty-five Rangers, constituting what was called the Pioneer Advance, left Seralvo, to proceed in advance and make such repairs to the road as might be required for the heavy trains to pass over. It was with this little detachment that I was ordered to go.

It was followed on the thirteenth by the First Division, and on each consecutive day by the other divisions. We kept a day's march in advance of the First Division for two days, but on the fourteenth our scouts, or rangers, came upon a party of the enemy's cavalry, and pursued them into a rancho, when they joined a body supposed to be some four or five hundred. This night we encamped at a place called Papa-Gallos, and being fifteen miles in advance of the army, and having but little over two hundred men, the enemy having three times our number, we expected, as a matter of course, he would attempt some enterprise against us, but he left us undisturbed.

On the fifteenth our little advance again pushed on, the enemy retiring, but in passing through a village, our Texas boys made a rush at them and delivered a fire, by which they tumbled two out of their saddles and got their lances and carbines. The Mexicans returned the fire without effect, and continued retiring. As they appeared to be increasing in force, General Taylor ordered us to halt until the First Division came up, so that we should be just in front of it, and we preserved this order of march up to our arrival at this place, Marin.

This little town, of some two thousand inhabitants, we found entirely deserted but by a few men, from whom we understood that the cavalry we had seen were under the command of General Towejon, who had a thousand at Marin, and some five hundred advanced near

Papa-Gallos, where we first saw them, and that they were a corps of observation, and also were driving the people before them and out of the way. In Marin they ordered every one out of the town, and those who were unable to move their property, they turned the soldiers into the houses and robbed them of everything. The poor people (after we had possession of the place for an hour, you could see the bushes and hills all around covered with women and children who had fled from the place, and were coming back as soon as they knew we were in quiet possession) were loud in their denunciations of their own soldiers, and expressed great gratification we had driven them out of the place.

Well, here we are within twenty-five miles of Monterey, one day's forced march, and two easy ones, and really we know no more of the nature of the reception they will give us, or of their defenses, or of the number of troops they have, than we did when at Matamoras, three hundred miles distant. I have taken every pains to find out the truth, and have heard a thousand contradictory stories, but have pretty much made up my mind *they will not fight*, and upon this ground, my last letter, if you recollect, said the point of meeting between the contending armies would depend upon the time the reinforcements from the interior should reach Monterey. It is now believed the force at Monterey consists of the *débris* of Arista's army, with inconsiderable reinforcements not over two thousand, making their regular force not over four thousand men, the number of their irregulars not known, and we do not care for them. Now, if they have only four thousand, they will never stand our seven thousand; then, if they are going to retire, they must do it before we reach there, or else all their artillery and public stores will fall into our hands; therefore I believe they are evacuating the town at this moment, and we shall march in without firing a gun—that is to say, provided our information proves correct, that they have no larger reinforcements. However, *conte qui conte*, or as old Rough and Ready says, "*Nolus volus*," we have to go in on the 20th instant.

We wait to-day for General Butler,¹ with the Volunteer Division, to come up, and to-morrow we move *en masse* upon the town. It will, I presume, take us two days to reach its vicinity, and on the third we will try their mettle. But I believe sincerely, as I told you before, that they will not resist our entrance, unless it be some skirmishing between our advance and their rear. And should we take

¹ Major-General William O. Butler, U. S. Vols.

Monterey quietly, and Saltillo, peace may be made before the two armies can meet again.

By our last mail, just received, an officer, whose wife is in Pensacola, wrote to him that Santa Anna had not only entered Vera Cruz with the cognizance of Commodore Connor, but they had a long and confidential interview together. I should judge from this Santa Anna was favorable to adjusting the difficulty, and will do all in his power. I believe now I have told you all the news, which is the general impression we shall soon get into good quarters without much hard fighting.

Be on your guard against newspaper reports, as a general rule false. Even in the army, in the rear divisions, they had us of the advance all cut to pieces, and were quite glad to see us alive when they came up.

My last letter will tell you all about the brevets. You have, however, done injustice to Bliss'¹ merits. He was not only in the battle, but had his horse struck twice, and is one of the most meritorious officers in the army. His position as Adjutant General placed him very near General Taylor, and all the despatches, correspondence, etc., have been written by him, and indeed nearly all the credit General Taylor has received is, in fact, due to Bliss' advice and counsel. Bliss is a good friend of mine, and, as I told you before, I was recommended for promotion. This was all General Taylor could do, for which I am really grateful to him.

I wish you were in this beautiful country, for here it is magnificent, the air balmy and pure, all the tropical fruits growing and we are just entering a level table-land, which leads to the mountains, twenty-five miles off, but so high we can see them towering away above the clouds, a most magnificent sight. Indeed, were I single, I should be tempted to spend my days in this lovely climate. On our march from Seralvo I never had a covering over my head, nor anything but my old india-rubber cloak spread on the ground for a bed. I slept soundly, and have no colds or rheumatism or any of the penalties I should pay, did I do this at home.

But I have not time to describe scenery to you, for I am of course much hurried, and in a marching army all is confusion and excitement.

Give my best love to dear mother and let her consider this letter as addressed to herself as well as you, you, who both and alone, with my dear children, fill my whole heart. Be patient and resigned; let

¹ Brevet-Major William W. S. Bliss, assistant adjutant-general.

us await God's good will, being confident He will protect us, and at the proper moment permit us to be reunited. My warmest prayers are for His blessings to be showered on you and our dear children.

MONTEREY, *September 25, 1846.*

Again return thanks to God for my providential escape from danger. Our little army appeared before this place on the 20th instant, finding it strongly fortified and garrisoned by about ten thousand men. We have been pretty much ever since engaged in fighting, and have suffered some terrible losses, but by skill and perseverance we brought the enemy to terms this afternoon, and a capitulation has been entered into by which a cessation of hostilities for two months is agreed upon, they guaranteeing peace, and they evacuate to-morrow, the town, leaving us masters of it, with all the public property.

I am writing this in a gun-carriage, and have only five minutes to assure you of my perfect safety. I will soon write again. Write to mother. Love to all, and you may look soon now, I think, for me.

MONTEREY, MEXICO, *September 27, 1846.*

I wrote you a few hasty lines on the twenty-fourth (misdated twenty-fifth) communicating to you our having taken this place, and promising soon to give you the particulars. I have been much occupied since, and, indeed, I believe no mail has since left. At any rate I assured you of my safety, and now proceed to give you particulars.

We arrived before Monterey on the 19th instant. I was in the advance with General Taylor, who was seeking a suitable camping ground for the army, beyond the range of the enemy's guns. We advanced within a mile of their works, but could see no sign of their occupation, and began to believe reports received en route, that they had deserted. Some of our bold fellows, however, who pushed nearer, found a cavalry force, with which they exchanged shots. The General, having selected a fit place for camp, ordered up the mounted 'Texans, one thousand in number, when the enemy finding we were not going to push into town and be caught in a trap, opened their batteries on us, and fired several times without doing any injury, though one ball, I assure you, came closer to me than I desire it to do again, just passing about two feet on one side of my knee. Finding we were in range of their guns, the General withdrew the Texans, and selected a camp some two and a half miles from the town. The

remainder of this day was spent by the engineer officers in reconnoitering the positions of the enemy, a duty, I assure you, sufficiently hazardous, as they were obliged to go with small parties and far from the camp, giving an enterprising enemy ample opportunity to cut them off. No such accident, however, occurred, and by night the reports were all in. It was found the town was most strongly fortified in the direction of Marin, and weak in that of Saltillo. In consequence, on the morning of the twentieth, while I was engaged in making a survey in front of the enemy's batteries, of the different positions, I received orders to report to General Worth, who, with his division (consisting of one regiment of Texas Rangers, four regiments of regular infantry, and two batteries of light artillery, in all about two thousand men), was ordered to advance upon the town in the direction of the Saltillo road. I immediately repaired to him, found the column ready to move, and in a few minutes marched with it.

We made a long detour, to avoid the batteries, and reached a rancho, where the command was halted, while the General and myself, with his staff, rode forward to reconnoitre the ground. Our advance was covered by about fifty Texans, and we proceeded along the road for two miles, till we came into the gorge through which the Saltillo road runs (see sketch), where the enemy were reported in large force in our front. Having seen all we wanted, we were about retiring, when they opened a fire upon us from a fence alongside of the road, where some of the rascals had sneaked up to cut us off, but it was promptly returned by the Texans, and we came quietly back to camp.

The next morning, the twenty-first, we started early to place ourselves in position on the Saltillo road, by which we should cut off the retreat of the enemy, and have an eye to the advance of his reinforcements, said to be daily expected. As we were turning the corner of the road entering the valley, the enemy showed himself with a large cavalry force, some two thousand, with some five hundred infantry, evidently intending to dispute our passage. I should, however, observe that on the afternoon previous, as well as this morning, in passing along the road we had been subjected to a plunging fire from two pieces on the top of "Independence Hill" (see sketch), from which, however, we sustained no damage. Finding the enemy in front, General Worth sent forward the Texans, who immediately engaged them, supported by two companies of infantry, acting as skirmishers. The Mexican cavalry charged on our people most gallantly, but were received with so warm a fire as to throw them into

confusion, and just as they were preparing for another charge, Colonel Duncan's battery opened on them, and at the first discharge strewed the ground with the dead, and they precipitately fled.

This little affair was very brilliant, and served to raise the spirits of all. The enemy's loss has been since ascertained to be one hundred killed and wounded, among the killed one colonel, one captain, and two subalterns, several officers wounded; we had but three wounded. The infantry and a portion of the cavalry retired towards the town, but twelve hundred of the cavalry went in the direction of Saltillo, and have not been heard from since. Finding an appearance, on the part of those who went towards the town, of renewing the contest, the light batteries opened on them from a hill on the north side of the gorge, which quickly dispersed them. At the same time a plunging fire from a piece on the top of Federation Hill was opened on us, obliging us to retire out of range of the shot, from whence commenced our operations on the town. Our only loss from this fire was Captain McKavett, Eighth Infantry, who was killed, and two men wounded.

You will now perceive from the sketch we were on the Saltillo road beyond the gorge through which it passes into town, and that this gorge was defended by artillery on the tops of these hills, and by a strong work around the Bishop's Palace, on one hill, and a redoubt opposite, on the other. It now became necessary to take these heights before we could advance upon the town. Accordingly, a command, consisting of two hundred Texans and four hundred regulars, was ordered to storm the summit of Federation Hill. This was handsomely done, though the hill was nearly a thousand feet high and very steep, defended by artillery and five hundred infantry. But so gallant was the attack, the enemy were driven from the summit without having time to carry their artillery, which was taken from them and turned upon their redoubt on the same hill, which in a short time was stormed and carried also, so that by night we had taken two of the four positions, and encamped in the gorge, as was designed in the morning. So much for our operations.

I regret to say those on the opposite side, though successful, were attended with more disastrous results. In order to divert the attention of the enemy from our operations, General Taylor directed Colonel Garland's brigade of regulars to advance on the eastern part of the town and cover an engineer officer, reconnoitering. In doing this they were obliged to pass through the cross-fire of all the

batteries in that direction, in which they suffered very much, but were able to pass through and get into the suburbs of the town. Finding no troops here, they thought they could go through the town, and thus take some of the batteries in the rear. But while in the town, ignorant of the streets and positions, they suddenly found where the streets were raked by four or five guns, and the first thing they knew, nearly one-half their men were lying on the ground, dead and wounded. The slaughter here was terrific; ten of our gallant officers fell to rise no more, and some ten others were wounded, some beyond the hope of recovery. The two regiments constituting the brigade were literally cut to pieces, and they were obliged to retire, leaving the dead and wounded on the ground. Among the officers who fell was Captain Williams, of my corps, who was leading the advance. This disastrous result was retrieved partially by a portion of the Third Division of Volunteers, which General Taylor, hearing firing, had despatched to reinforce the first command. This brigade, consisting of the Tennessee and Mississippi regiments, not knowing where our people were, advanced right in the face of one battery (marked C), when finding themselves so near, they gallantly charged and took it, driving the enemy from the guns, and retaining possession of the place. Thus terminated the 21st of September.

In which you will see that on our side, we had defeated the enemy, having superior force, in open fight, under their batteries, and taken from them two pieces of artillery; that on the other side, though suffering a repulse with great loss, yet we took from him a fort with four guns. The loss on our side was about twenty killed and wounded, one captain killed, and two officers wounded; on General Taylor's side, some three hundred killed and wounded, some twelve officers killed and eight wounded. The loss of the enemy is supposed to be about two hundred in killed and wounded; but the moral effect was great. With us they saw judgment and energy quietly but surely advancing; on the other side, impetuosity and fearless courage, that showed a determination at all sacrifice to carry everything before them.

Early on the morning of the twenty-second a party of some five hundred regulars and Texans were sent from our division to storm the height of Independence Hill. By daylight they were at the summit, driving the enemy from the position into the Bishop's Palace, from whence they kept up an incessant fire of musketry upon our people, with but little effect. Finding the Bishop's Palace too strong

to be carried by infantry, a piece of artillery was taken to pieces and carried up by hand to the summit, which piece with great skill threw shrapnel shells (shells filled with musket balls) right into the palace and the open work in front. This made the place so untenable that the enemy undertook to drive us from the summit, and made a charge of cavalry and infantry up the hill. In this they were defeated, and, on retiring, were so vigorously pursued by our people, that they continued beyond the Bishop's Palace, leaving this work, with four pieces of artillery, in our hands, and they retired into the town. Thus, for to-day's work, we had the other two points, giving us four of the enemy's positions, with six of his guns, and the free entrance to the city by the Saltillo road. Our loss to-day was only one officer of the Texas Rangers, mortally wounded, and some five killed and half a dozen wounded; the loss of the enemy much more considerable.

At the eastern end of the town, so crippled were they the previous day, they contented themselves with keeping up from the redoubt they had taken a vigorous fire upon the other works of the enemy (marked D. E. T. G. H.).

On the 23d instant we opened a fire on the town, with the enemy's guns at the Bishop's Palace, and moved the gun taken in the redoubt on Federation Hill farther on the hill, to the point marked P. This fire was kept up vigorously all the morning. In the meantime the General sent me forward on a reconnoissance, to ascertain what batteries the enemy had in our direction. In doing this I ascertained the enemy had abandoned all that portion of the town in our direction, and had retired to the central plaza of the town, where they were barricaded, and all the houses occupied by their infantry. General Worth immediately advanced on the town and took possession, without resistance, of the plaza of La Purissima, where we found a cemetery and church, which our infantry occupied, and where we placed an eight-inch mortar in excellent range to play into the plaza, which was now the enemy's last stronghold.

After occupying the plaza of La Purissima, we threw forward our infantry to that portion of the town occupied by the enemy. They had occupied the main plaza and some two squares around it in each direction; they had erected across the streets solid masonry walls, with embrasures for guns to fire grape, sweeping the street; then all the houses in the neighborhood were occupied by their infantry, loopholes being made to enable them to fire in any direction. Had we

attempted to advance up the streets, as our poor fellows had done previously, all would have been cut to pieces; but we were more skillfully directed. As soon as we came near their position, we broke into the adjoining houses, and sent our sharpshooters on their tops, where, sheltered by the parapets, they could look over and pick off all Mexicans who showed their heads above the houses in front. Having thus driven the enemy from the houses in front, the engineer officers were engaged with picks and crowbars in making holes from house to house, through which our people advanced, and in this manner, by nightfall, we were enabled to reach within one square of the plaza, and rendered certain our coming to close quarters the next day. Our troops remained in the houses, where they ceased firing and were prepared to commence anew at daylight next day.

On General Taylor's side, to-day, it was found, early in the morning, the fire from our fort had been so warm, the enemy had deserted all their other batteries, carrying their guns into the plaza. These were immediately occupied by our troops, and they commenced an advance upon the town, in the same cautious manner we had done, and reached by nightfall a position as near the plaza as we had done, so that by night we had driven the enemy from all his exterior works, taken eleven guns, and had approached him in the town itself, within one square on each side of his stronghold. He still had his citadel, but we were screened from its fire by the town itself. During the night our mortar threw shells every half an hour into the plaza, so accurately as to make many fall within a few feet of the church, their main magazine, and almost every one killed from six to ten soldiers. You see, they were so crowded in the space they occupied, that if the shell fell with any accuracy, its execution was terrible. So ended the twenty-third. I should mention the enemy endeavored to return our compliments, and threw shells from the citadel into the cemetery occupied by our mortar battery, but without any effect.

On the morning of the twenty-fourth, as we were commencing to renew the assault, confident the night would give us the town, a white flag came from General Ampudia, asking of General Taylor permission to evacuate the town, as he now saw resistance was no longer available. General Taylor had an interview with him, in which Ampudia begged hard for easy terms, saying he was still strong, having yet five thousand men and twenty-eight pieces of artillery; but, understanding our Government had offered peace to Mexico, he was willing to make an honorable compromise between

the armies, which would open the door to negotiations between the Governments, as, should things be carried to extremities, the defeated party would not listen to terms.

There being something reasonable in this, and much blood having been shed, and there being many private persons who would suffer in person and property if things were carried farther, General Taylor gave as his ultimatum the following terms: The Mexican Army to evacuate the place in seven days, and retire beyond the Rinconada, forty miles from here, to which point we were at liberty to advance. The infantry and cavalry to take their arms; the artillery, six pieces of light-artillery; all the rest of the public property and munitions of war to be ours, and the town to be given up to our exclusive possession. One hour was given Ampudia to answer. At the termination of thirty minutes he accepted, and immediately three commissioners on each side were appointed, who drew up the terms of capitulation, which were signed by ten o'clock that night. This result has been caviled at by many, as it is said we had them completely in our power, and one more day's operations would have given us the town, or an unconditional surrender, and that letting these people off, we should only have to meet them again at Saltillo. But, for my part, I approve General Taylor's course. They were still very strong in the town, having three thousand men and twenty pieces of artillery, costing an immense sacrifice to subdue them. Then their strongest work, the citadel, with a garrison of two thousand five hundred men and eight pieces of artillery, was untouched, and would have required still greater loss to reduce, though I am confident both town and citadel would have been in our hands in a few more days. But our volunteer force, which had shared in the disastrous losses of the eastern side, were beginning to be disorganized, and already regiments were holding back, and individuals refusing to advance, and they could not be longer depended on. The regulars were crippled almost to inefficiency, and in addition, the enemy were in hourly expectation of reinforcements. Apart from these considerations, we knew Santa Anna was willing to compromise this question if he could. Should we act with forbearance towards the army, and give it honorable terms, it was probable we might have its voice in favor of peace, as the national pride, so sensitive, might not be aroused by an honorable capitulation. Again, it was doubtful if we should have gained more by pushing matters, as it was in the power of the enemy to run off in the night, carrying all with them which we allowed them

to carry, except the six pieces of artillery (a trifle), and destroying much valuable property, now ours. Besides, there can be no doubt of the condition to which we had brought them, for the facts speak for themselves. Here was an army of six thousand men giving up to us a town with twenty-two pieces of artillery and a vast amount of the munitions of war, and retiring eighty miles to the interior and leaving us in a place they had attempted to defend. No army that was not badly whipped would have done this, and as to fighting us again, if they had all been made prisoners of war, we could not keep them, we should have been obliged to let them go, and all would have taken arms again, in spite of agreements and paroles; so we gained all we could, did away with any chance of failure, and made them believe they, as well as ourselves, were great people.

It is now ascertained they had at the commencement nine thousand men and thirty-eight pieces of artillery, with strong works, and only the defence to make. We, with six thousand, and no heavy artillery for a siege-train, one hundred and thirty miles from all our depots and supplies, and obliged to attack in the face of all this artillery, brought them to these terms. So ended the siege of Monterey, an affair, I deem, most honorable to our arms.

There was some little disposition on the part of Ampudia to jockey. There is no doubt the Mexicans were in a state of disorganization and mutiny, and that he would have been forced to accept almost any terms General Taylor had offered to him, but our old General was desirous of playing a liberal and generous part by them, and thought it impolitic to push them too hard.

For my part, you may rest assured, I was exceedingly rejoiced; many of our brave fellows slept in a nameless grave, for the bodies of some were never recovered; and any one who for four days and nights is in constant state of exposure to fire-arms of all descriptions will be very well satisfied to terminate so disagreeable an occupation.

All the amateurs accompanying the army, and we have a goodly number, are now satisfied, and are now going home. Among them was Bailie Peyton, who was an *attache* to General Worth. Owing to this I saw a great deal of him, and have been much pleased with his wit and humor under the most trying circumstances. We would often express to each other what enjoyment Mr. Wise¹ would have here, and you can write to Mr. Wise and tell him we all, and Colonel

¹ Henry A. Wise, brother-in-law of Mrs. Meade, afterward Governor of Virginia.

Campbell also, of Tennessee (a very handsome fellow, who was the first to enter the enemy's batteries) thought of him. He was in Congress at the same time with Mr. Wise and Peyton.

You will doubtless see the official reports, and the newspapers will be filled with anecdotes of the various attacks. I hope the people of the country will appreciate what we have done, and for myself individually, if I get the approbation of those in whose hearts I wish to live, it is all that I ask.

I do not think I mentioned in the terms of capitulation, that an armistice had been agreed upon for two months, unless either or both Governments should be sooner heard from. This time, it is presumed, will be ample for both Governments to settle the terms of a treaty, or at least determine the question of peace or a continuance of the war. We, however, have reports through New Orleans and Vera Cruz that a counter-revolution against Santa Anna commenced at San Luis Potosi; but here they say it was a trifling affair and soon put down. But the rumor from the interior is, that the people of the City of Mexico have declared against Santa Anna, rendering doubtful his being able to maintain himself in power; all these, however, are rumors. I think that if Santa Anna remains in power he will make peace, because I believe the army that left here is desirous of it, and it will impress the remainder of the army, which controls public opinion in this country. If he is overthrown, there is no telling what will be the result. It will also greatly depend on the demands of our Government. If not too exigent, I am inclined to believe the great expenditure of money, and the recent loss of life, will induce it to be more liberal than otherwise. If we had had a commissioner with us, he could by this time have been near the City of Mexico.

I have again, through the misfortunes of others, been placed in the agreeable position of head of my corps, and as long as I remain so, my desire to leave is greatly diminished.

Major Craig is well and safe. What part he took in the recent events, I cannot say, as he was at the eastern end of the town. John Pemberton I saw a great deal of; he is aide to General Worth. Of course, being on the same staff, we were together all the time. He discharged his duties with great credit to himself, and was fortunate to receive no wound. I do not think you know any of the killed or wounded officers. Richard Graham, the son of Mrs. Graham in Washington, is very badly wounded, but hopes are entertained he

will get over it. James Ricketts, Mrs. Robert Meade's¹ brother, is safe. I saw him at various times during the actions, as his regiment was under General Worth's command.

Now for a few private lines, in which I wish to express to you my heartfelt gratitude that it has pleased God once more to pass me through untold dangers, and to allow me still to cling to the hope of once more being reunited to you. God knows what joy it brings to my heart to anticipate the happiness we shall have together, and the deep anxiety I have to behold again my blessed little children, whose images are as fresh in my heart as the day I left them. Tell the boys I will give them a long story about it all, when I get back.

After your good father has read this letter, I wish you would communicate its contents to dear mother, Major Bache and Pemberton.

My sketch is exceedingly rough, but will serve to illustrate the narrative.

MONTEREY, MEXICO, *October 5, 1846.*

I have but little information to give you. The Mexican army has all gone to Saltillo, where Ampudia has published a flourishing proclamation, assigning as a reason for his evacuating this place that his ammunition and provisions were exhausted; whereas we captured ammunition to last us two more fights and provisions enough to supply us some weeks. He also states he repelled all our assaults, and that we left on the ground some fifteen hundred killed and wounded. In fact, his whole proclamation is a tissue of the grossest falsehoods, which, of course, we expected him to make to his own people, to save himself. But I very much fear the thing will go further, and that the capitulation of Monterey will, like the convention of Cintra, prove most unpopular.

It is now rendered beyond a doubt that the Mexicans were entirely and completely in our power. A few hours more fighting would have brought about a surrender, at discretion, of the whole army.

General Taylor was actuated by the highest motives in allowing them the terms he did, hoping, upon the representations of Ampudia, it would be the means of negotiating a peace; but from all we can now understand, Ampudia's whole conversation and all his statements prove to be false, made through fear, and with the hope (justly realized) of getting out of a bad scrape.

The general impression now is that we will not obtain peace. If

¹ Sister-in-law of Lieutenant Meade.

so, we have missed the opportunity of making some seven thousand men prisoners. Ampudia distinctly stated to General Taylor that he had received information from the City of Mexico that morning (the 24th), that an American Minister was to be received; whereas Santa Anna's reply to Mr. Buchanan,¹ published in the Mexican journals, (and in Ampudia's possession), states distinctly that he cannot take upon himself the responsibility of making peace; it must be referred to the Mexican Congress, which does not meet till December. How then could a Minister be received before the answer of Congress? This proves he knew he was uttering false statements. Indeed, no reliance is to be placed on anything these people say. The highest among them know not what honor and veracity are; and it is useless to expect anything from any influence brought to bear upon them, except fear, and our whole course must be changed ere we can expect to bring them to terms. Here is a third victory without result, everything to be done over again, and our obstacles increasing as we advance.

If the Government of Mexico now refuse peace, upon such terms as the United States are ready to offer, and they are such as the world will not condemn, it will be necessary for our country to make up its mind to a long war of sacrifice, on our part, which will be the longer, the less energetically it is pursued. In the first place, this line of operations we are now on must be abandoned after we reach Saltillo (seventy miles from here), for, from that point, it is two hundred and fifty miles to San Luis Potosi, over a barren country, with no permanent supplies of water, only tanks and reservoirs for rain-water, which they can easily destroy as we approach; and when we get to San Luis, we are some six hundred miles from the City of Mexico.²

Should the Government determine upon continuing on this route, we must take Tampico, and then, when we reach San Luis, we can open our communications with Tampico, some three hundred miles off, as far as Vera Cruz is from the city itself.

Vera Cruz must be taken, and an attack made on the city from that direction. It is well to have it in conjunction with this, if the Government chooses, but the main attack must be on the line of Vera Cruz. An army of twenty-five thousand men at least, well

¹ James Buchanan, Secretary of State, U. S. Government, afterward President of the United States.

² Should be three hundred miles.

supplied with artillery and all the munitions of war, should be landed at Alvarado, and advance from thence on Vera Cruz, and in conjunction with the navy take that place, from whence they should advance into the interior. At the same time twenty-five hundred men should advance from San Luis Potosi towards the same point, and some twenty-five hundred men are required to hold the country and occupy it, from Tampico to the Californias.

It is only by doing things on this scale, vigorously, and at every cost of blood and money, that "an honorable peace will ever be conquered." Neither the Government of Mexico nor her people care about the occupation of the country we are now in. It is a positive benefit to the people; we are spending here a large portion of the revenues of the United States, and making money more plenty than it ever was before. If the Government is determined on operating on this long line, it should take full possession of every Department as it conquers it, overthrow all Mexican jurisdiction, proclaim it to the world as part of the United States, appoint all the necessary officers for a Territorial Government, and extend our laws over it, sequestering the property of all those who left the country or refused to take the oath of allegiance. Then Mexico would look with some anxiety upon our approach, as she saw Department after Department lopped off, and she would be obliged to make vigorous efforts to defend her soil, which, if we overcome, would be arguments in our favor.

But, as it is, a small band is pushed into the interior of the country, where it is obliged to advance under every disadvantage, and whose success is followed by no material advantage, the country in our rear being as fully in the possession of Mexico as if we had not passed over it. We may go on in this way for five years, and not conquer peace. The loss of a few soldiers, and the temporary occupation of her frontier towns, is no embarrassment to Mexico; her capital and her vital parts must be touched. Once occupy these (and we can do it as readily as we operate here, if we have the proportionate means), and she will be brought to terms.

October 6.

I have written a long dissertation on the plans proper to be adopted in the event of the prosecution of the war, which now seems to be looked upon as certain among the best informed persons in our army, and among the Mexicans at this place.

As to my personal interests, I presume, of course, that I am to remain here till it is all over, unless I make an application to be relieved, which I cannot bring my mind to do. They have a joke among the officers, that it is bad business for any officer to be sent here to command me, for he will be sure to be killed; and it is strange. Of the three superior officers who have been sent here at various times, the first (Captain Cram) had to leave the country soon after his arrival, on account of ill-health; the second (poor Blake) shot himself; and the third (Captain Williams) fell in the recent operations against Monterey; leaving me each time the senior officer of Topographical Engineers. General Worth, with whom I served during the recent operations, has been pleased to speak well of me in his report, and when I thanked him for it, he observed "that he trusted the thing would not end there, and I might rest assured his best efforts would be exerted in my behalf."

October 9.

I have nothing new to tell you this morning. There is a report that General Canalisso has been placed in command of the Mexican forces; that he has arrived at San Luis, with a large army, and ordered Ampudia to fall back from Saltillo to that place. It is hard to tell what inference is to be drawn from this. It is a proper measure in the event of peace, and equally so in case the war continues, for it forces us to march some four hundred miles before we can get to them, which will take us, with our movements, over a month; and as the armistice lasts two months, they will have three to fortify and prepare to make their stand at a point three hundred miles nearer the capital than Saltillo is, so that no deduction can be made from this move, and it is only a report, of which there are a thousand in circulation each day, all contradicted the succeeding days.

Last night's mail brings orders for Captain Linnard of our corps to repair here, so that my enjoyment of seniority will last but a short time, as I suppose Captain Linnard will be here in the course of a week or two.

October 10.

The news from Saltillo to-day is to the effect that the people of that place have positively refused to allow their town to be fortified, pointing to Monterey, which is naturally much stronger, and saying that if the Mexicans could not defend that place, with all its strength, it is useless to try at Saltillo. What effect this argument will have

upon their army is unknown, but rumor says they are retiring to San Luis, and have abandoned the pass of Las Muertas, on the road from here to Saltillo, which they had commenced to fortify.

It appears that Canalis, who was reported to have assumed the head of the army, is in Madrid, but papers from the City of Mexico, as late as the 14th ultimo, contain a proclamation of Santa Anna's, in which he modestly declines the supreme power, in order to place himself at the head of the army, to conquer or die. This is easily understood. Some individual named Salis, or Salisar, is temporarily placed at the head of affairs, a puppet of Santa Anna's, to bear the brunt of disaster, should things turn out badly, he taking all the credit as director, should the result be fortunate. It is supposed that whoever makes peace will be overthrown, and we know that whoever continues the war, and is unsuccessful, will have to yield to the popular will. Santa Anna, by throwing the responsibility of the Government on Salis, and of the army on some general (for nobody supposes he is coming to try his fortune), endeavors to trim his sails to the breeze of public opinion, and save himself by sacrificing his creatures.

MONTEREY, *October 13, 1846.*

Poor Richard Graham died to-day, making the fifteenth officer killed in the attack on Monterey. This will be a sad blow to his poor mother.

Great indignation now prevails in the army at orders recently received from Washington, directing General Taylor to send General Patterson to Tampico with a large portion of his (General Taylor's) force, to take that place. This is considered an outrage upon all military propriety, cutting up a commanding general's force, without reference to him, or the circumstances in which he may find himself.

MONTEREY, *October 20, 1846.*

I regret to tell you my boasted good health has been slightly disturbed. Soon after writing my last letter to you, I was taken with chills and fever, a disease very prevalent at this moment in the army, and attributed to the reaction from the active and exciting life we have been leading, and to the injudicious use of the fruits of the country. To the latter cause I attribute my attack, for I indulged without any discretion in the use of oranges and pome-

granates, not dreaming they could be of any injury. The disease, however, is of a very mild character. I broke mine after the second attack, and have now been six days without a return, and hope with care to avoid it in future. Nearly one-third the army is down with it, and many of the poor wounded fellows have been attacked. It is said to be a very common disease at this place, though for what reason I cannot tell, for this appears the garden spot of the earth, the air purity itself, and no source of malaria visible. I wish you could be here to enjoy the delicious climate, to see the exquisite landscapes presented by the towering mountains, and the rich and fertile valley at their feet.

I believe I told you I had been living in town since the capitulation. At first I lived in a house with General Worth, who has shown the most uniform kindness to me; but not wishing to trespass too far upon his civility, and the death of Captain Williams making me senior, and thus detaching me from General Worth's staff and re-attaching me to headquarters, I left General Worth's house, and have taken possession of one left in his charge by the proprietor, General Ortega, of the Mexican Army. This is considered one of the handsomest houses in town, and is furnished in a style considered in this country magnificent. The custom of the country is to furnish most plainly. Generally a table and a few chairs constitute the furniture of the parlors, and a bed, with a few chairs, that of the bedroom. But General Ortega, who is a man of wealth, and has been Governor of this Department (Nuevo Leon), a traveled man withal, has gone to great expense in furnishing his mansion, and I am now deriving the benefit of his liberality. The house has six rooms in it, as the subjoined sketch shows. The parlor, a long room, about the size, I should suppose, of the two in Fourth Street, is furnished with two mahogany pier-tables (French), with large mirrors over them. In each of the four corners are corner-pieces (tables), with vases filled with beautiful wax flowers, covered with glass. There are two mahogany centre-tables, cane-bottom and painted chairs, a mahogany sofa at one end, with a strip of ingrain carpet in front—a great luxury, and the only carpet I have seen in the town. The windows, uniformly open to the air, here have glass doors (of very large panes) to keep out the air when cold; the doors are all glass doors. A very splendid French clock, with ormolu ornaments, is on a table at the foot of the parlors, and the walls are hung all around with beautiful colored engravings (French), illustrating historical events in Spanish

history. Then with curtains (narrow strips) of red and yellow, hung from gilt arrows, you have the parlor, the *tout ensemble* of which, I assure you, is exceedingly refreshing to one who has seen nothing like civilization for fifteen months. The bed-rooms have French bedsteads. There is no house linen, or any other furniture but such as stands in the rooms. My messmates are Lieutenant Scarret, of the Corps of Engineers, with whom I lived at Matamoras, and a Lieutenant Pope, of my own corps. We each of us have our own servants, one of whom is cook, the other hostler, and the third plays waiter; so that we are quite comfortable, and, from our luxurious quarters, the envy of the army. Unfortunately we have no mess furniture but our old tin camp equipage; but we manage to get along with this in preference to paying the enormous sum it would require to fit us out with more suitable apparatus. Besides, our stay being uncertain, it would be absurd to purchase articles perfectly useless to us when we leave.

General Taylor, as usual, is in camp three miles from town, and has with him two-thirds of the army. General Worth, with his division, all regulars, occupies the town and keeps it in order. In consequence of this arrangement, good order has hitherto prevailed; no liquor is permitted to be sold to the soldiers, and no person allowed to reside in the town who cannot give a satisfactory account of himself. By these means it is hoped to exclude the gambling shops and grogeries that disgraced Corpus Christi and Matamoras, and which were the fertile sources of murder and robbery, together with every other crime. It is also hoped that the quiet and security thus given to life and property will induce the inhabitants, all of whom have left the place, to return, when we hope to have some gayety and amusement. This place is said to contain many wealthy and agreeable families; but the fears of the assault caused them all to fly to Saltillo and other places in the neighborhood of the city. None have as yet returned, for the volunteers have made themselves so terrible by their previous outrages as to have inspired the Mexicans with a perfect horror of them, and until they are assured of their security they will not return from their hiding places.

I have but little to add to my surmises (in the shape of intelligence) in former letters. It is now rendered beyond a doubt that Santa Anna is at San Luis, with eight thousand regulars, has drawn in there Ampudia with his eight thousand, and is busily engaged reorganizing and putting in order these sixteen thousand men, at the same time

that he is making the most vigorous efforts to raise thirty thousand volunteers. He will not advance, it is said, beyond San Luis, but ascertaining our news from the mail captured from us (which had despatches directing General Taylor's attention to Tampico), it is said he has sent a large force to Tampico (the rest he keeps at San Luis), and will hold himself in readiness with a reserve to go to either point threatened. This shows him a good soldier, and should the war continue, I have no doubt my anticipations of his energy will all be realized.

MONTEREY, MEXICO, *October 27, 1846.*

General Taylor told me, a few days ago, he had written to Washington, dissuading the Government against continuing operations any farther on this line, it being too long; and requiring, in case it insists upon his advancing in this direction, that he be furnished with twenty thousand well disciplined men for the marching army, and five thousand to cover his rear and line of communications. At the same time he insists upon having more wagons and means of transportation furnished him. At the same time he advises the Government to allow him to take Tampico, and to hold the line of the Sierra Madre from Tampico to this place. Then, with General Wool at Monclova and Chihuahua, and General Kearney at Santa Fe and in California, we shall hold military possession of five of Mexico's provinces. Then let her come and take them from us, and we await her action.

This plan of an armed occupation, I, individually, am opposed to, upon the ground of its never having any end; for Mexico, though she will hardly undertake to drive us out, will nevertheless be always talking about it, and making preparations, which will compel us to be always prepared by having a large army on this frontier. Then, again, the expense will be enormous of maintaining such an army as it will be absolutely necessary we should have, besides the opposition there would be on the part of the North to see such immense increase of Southern territory. I hope these reasons will induce the Government, even should it accede to his "armed occupation," to continue active operations against Mexico by sending an army to Vera Cruz, and advancing on the capital, and compelling them at every sacrifice, by force of arms, to sue for peace. In the first place, I think it due to our national honor, after all the bluster we have made, to show them we could do what we said we would; and then, after offering

them peace, and they rejecting it, we should at least make an effort to compel them. We hear nothing from Santa Anna at San Luis.

A sad accident happened yesterday, which has thrown a gloom over the camp, and by which the army is likely to lose one of its most gallant officers. Captain Randolph Ridgely, of the Light Artillery, was yesterday thrown from his horse, while riding in the street, and falling on his head, received some injury in the brain, which it is feared will terminate his life. This young officer is the one who, in my opinion, most distinguished himself in the affairs of the 8th and 9th of May. He commanded Ringgold's battery on the 9th, and gallantly drove it up within two hundred yards of the Mexican artillery, unlimbered his pieces, and returned their fire, all in the face of their eight pieces of artillery. In our recent operations he was equally distinguished for his cool and undaunted bravery, and it seems hard, after passing with so much credit through these three affairs, he should finally die the inglorious death that threatens him. He is a son of General Ridgely, of Baltimore; very handsome, and distinguished for his fine manners and courteous affability. He was the young man who brought Rebecca McLane to mother's party, given to you as a bride in Washington. He is universally looked upon as the *preux chevalier* of the army.

I have entirely recovered from my chills and fever—in fact, having been well ever since I broke them, having had only two attacks. Almost every one has had them, even the poor wounded fellows in hospital, and many have died in consequence. The medical officers say that this climate is unfavorable to the healing of wounds, and that they have lost many who were only slightly wounded, and would, without doubt, have recovered, had they been in the United States.

By the time this reaches you the official reports will have been published. General Taylor has again (much to the dissatisfaction of the army) made a wholesale business of mentioning names, and has made no distinctions as to individuals; so, when he recommends promotions, he will follow the same plan, and begin at the highest and name all his commanding officers, from generals down to colonels (he having an awful respect for rank), whether they do anything or not. Thus, at the Resaca de la Palma, the action was fought *entirely* by the *platoon officers*, the younger members of the army, and yet only two received promotion, all the rewards being given to the old men of rank, some of whom were not in the action; but General

Taylor mentioned them all, because they were in command of regiments.

We are all very anxious to see the papers from the United States, for we, on the ground, never know who are the heroes of the affairs until we see the papers giving an account of the battle. I think General Worth will be the great hero, and will without doubt be made a major general. His success here will do away with all the bad consequences of his folly opposite Matamoras, which, I believe, he now most sincerely regrets himself.

You tell me in your last letter that the children were all well. God grant, in His mercy, they may continue so, as well as yourself, for whose safety and happiness I ever pray. It pains me to be unable to give you any definite idea of my return; I am as much in the dark as yourself. If there is a cessation of active operations, and an armed occupation goes into effect, I shall endeavor to get away. If active operations are continued, and there is a prospect of again meeting the enemy, I must remain and take my chance.

MONTEREY, *November 4, 1846.*

I heard of the arrival last night at the camp of Major James Graham, as bearer of despatches to General Taylor, and an orderly has just handed me a letter from Edward Ingraham,¹ of the 13th October, written at Washington, and telling me they had received the intelligence of the affair of Monterey. Major Graham I must go out to the camp immediately to see. I understand the purport of his despatches is a *disapproval* of the armistice, and orders for General Taylor to prosecute the war with vigor and continue his advance. So there is an end to all peace, and God knows now when we shall have it.

What we are going to do no one can tell. It seems the prevalent opinion that the march to San Luis is impracticable, from want of water and supplies; so Tampico will, without doubt, be the next point of attack. We shall find the Mexicans prepared, in large force, well fortified, and with plenty of artillery, so that we may anticipate warm work.

MONTEREY, *November 10, 1846.*

Another week has passed, and mail day again arrived, but with it the destruction of all hopes of peace, at least for the present. Since

¹ Nephew of Lieutenant Meade.

my last I have received your letters of the 6th and 9th ultimo, the latter bearing evident traces of the excitement you were in, owing to the uncertainty of affairs here.

Of course, with the intelligence of our victory, you were informed of its barrenness, the Government having despatched Major Graham to have the armistice immediately annulled. It does not disapprove of General Taylor's terms of capitulation, but it is pretty well understood it only desisted because it wished to feel the public pulse, before it committed itself.

That we had the Mexicans completely in our power, and could have slaughtered the greater part of them before they could have made their escape, was well known to the whole army. It was no *military necessity* that induced General Taylor to grant such liberal terms, but a higher and nobler motive. First, to grant an opportunity to the two Governments to negotiate for peace, knowing, as he did, that should he destroy the Mexican army, the Government would never listen to overtures of peace under the disgrace. Secondly, to stop the unnecessary effusion of blood, not only of soldiers, but of old and infirm women and children, whom necessity kept in the city, and who were crowded with the troops in the small space they had retired to, and were surrounded by our troops, from whom every shot told. Thirdly, as a tribute of respect to the gallantry of the Mexicans, who had defended their place as long as it was in their power.

As to the armistice, it was nothing, no loss of time, for we are not prepared now, and could not have been in less time, to advance. As to the army, we might have secured their arms, but what to do with seven thousand prisoners! We could not send them to the United States, nor could we guard them here; we should have been obliged to release them upon some kind of engagement not to serve again, and this they would have violated upon the first opportunity.

But it was the hope of peace resulting from it, which outweighed all other considerations with the commanding general; it was the hope of inducing the Mexican Government, by not pressing too hard its army, and granting it easy terms, by soothing their mortified vanity, to listen to the offers of our Government for negotiation. It has resulted unsuccessfully, and of course, as in all military movements, want of success damns it; but had peace followed, the gratitude of the Government and laudations of the people would have been without bounds.

The old gentleman appears quite satisfied, says he has done his duty, and his conscience is easy. He expresses himself ready to leave the field whenever the Government desire it, and I really believe he would be quite satisfied to be recalled; for he finds himself called upon to perform impossible things, and has not even the control of his own forces. The cabinet at Washington, profiting by the history of the Aulic Council, is manœuvring his troops for him, and at Washington, entirely independent of his wishes and views, organizing expeditions for Tampico, even going so far as to designate the troops and their commanders. To-be-sure, it is well understood how this is done, by the mighty engine of political influence, that curse of our country, which forces party politics into everything.

General Patterson and others are good Democrats; they are indignant that General Taylor should have left them in the rear when he carried more troops than he could feed. They complain at Washington, and forthwith General Patterson and Co. are directed to proceed against Tampico, and General Patterson informed before his commanding general knows anything about it. Well may we be grateful that we are at war with Mexico! Were it any other power, our gross follies would have been punished severely before now.

General Taylor, of course, has to succumb, and the Tampico expedition is to be immediately prosecuted. General Patterson goes from Camargo, in command of about one thousand regular troops, and some two or three thousand volunteers, all now on the Rio Grande. He marches direct to Tampico. General Taylor, however, does not design that he shall have it in his power, from ignorance or other causes, to fail; therefore he will leave here with a column of some two thousand men and artillery, light and heavy, and will join General Patterson before he reaches Tampico, when both columns united, and under General Taylor's command, will operate against the town, in conjunction with the navy, if the latter have it in its power to do anything.

In the meantime General Worth, with three regiments of infantry and one light battery of artillery, leaves day after to-morrow for Saltillo, which place he will occupy for the present. He will, in the course of a few weeks, be reinforced by General Wool and his command, whose expedition to Chihuahua (another affair of the Aulic Councils) has proved an utter failure, as he finds he cannot get to Chihuahua without first going to Saltillo, and then has some six hundred miles to go back to reach Chihuahua, and no enemy but dis-

tance to encounter. So General Taylor, who has abstained from any interference with him up to this moment (though under his command), wishing the views of the Aulic Council to have full swing, now that General Wool reports that he cannot get to his destination without advancing beyond General Taylor's command, and consuming his provisions and supplies, and that then he must go back again, as far as he came almost. General Taylor, I understand, directs him to halt at Saltillo, which will make at that point a force of between four and five thousand men under Generals Wool and Worth.

Major General Butler will remain here with some twenty-five hundred men, volunteers and regulars. At this place there will be a large depot of supplies of all kinds. General Taylor will himself go to Saltillo, with General Worth's column, and after looking around and having the country reconnoitered in the direction of San Luis Potosi, he will return here, and go down to Tampico (by the road of Linares and Victoria), in time to meet General Patterson.

I shall accompany General Taylor to Saltillo, and return with him, and accompany him to Tampico, unless Captain Linnard should in the meantime arrive, and he is daily expected, when some other disposition not now anticipated may be made of me.

So much for our movements, considered by some injudicious, because our force is scattered over an immense extent of country, taking time to concentrate it, and giving the Mexican general, if he has any enterprise, the opportunity of directing his masses against a portion of it, and overwhelming it before it can be reinforced, after the plan of Napoleon.

On the other side, it is urged that the Mexicans have proved themselves utterly destitute of enterprise, and could not be brought to act in this vigorous way, and that if they did, the forces at these places, with slight defenses, are sufficiently strong to keep off the whole nation. In my own judgment both parties err, the one attributing too much, and the other too little, to the Mexicans.

I presume that General Taylor's idea is to hold this country to Saltillo, and keep his troops ready to carry out the orders of the Government, to which he has communicated the impracticability of moving on San Luis from Saltillo, owing to the length of the road, without provisions and without water. At the same time he will take Tampico, and then we shall have full possession of the country on this side of the Sierra Madre. If the Government directs him, in spite of all obstacles, to advance on San Luis, he will have his force

at Saltillo ready to do it. Should it turn its attention to Vera Cruz, as it is to be hoped it will, he will have a force at Tampico, ready to take shipping to that place.

As to the intelligence from the interior, it is contradictory. An Englishman of some shrewdness arrived a few days ago, who says Santa Anna is making every effort to raise an army of forty thousand men, but progresses very slowly; that at present he has only some twelve thousand, and they almost disorganized; that they want money, arms, clothing, and almost everything; that Santa Anna has determined to diminish his line of operations, so as to force us to encounter all the disadvantages of distance; that he has recalled his troops from Tampico, not wishing to hazard a defeat there; that fortifications are being made at San Luis, Zacatecas, and other places along his line; and that they expect the next affair to be at San Luis, supposing we will immediately advance on that point. All this looks plausible enough, but I place no confidence in any Mexican news I hear, and I can hardly believe they will abandon Tampico, at least before we make a demonstration on it.

No one now talks of peace, but all conversation is directed to the movements in advance and the anticipations incident thereto. There are still some few stubborn spirits left, who say they will not give up all hope of peace until they see the action of the Mexican Congress, about to meet; that they trust the Congress will have the good sense to force the generals and the army to make peace. But for myself, I have no such hope; I fear the Mexican character for overweening vanity is of such a nature that the more you whip them, the less disposed they will be to arrange matters, and that we have before us a long and tedious war, involving consequences to us not now anticipated. God in His mercy grant I may be wrong, and that the good sense of both nations may bring about the accommodation of a dispute, the continuance of which injures both, while neither can possibly derive any benefit. For myself, individually, you know my sentiments; opposed, at first, to this war, brought on by our injustice to a neighbor, and uncalled-for aggression, she, in her stupidity and folly, giving our rulers plausible excuses for their conduct; but when once in it, I should and have desired to see it conducted in a vigorous manner, and brought to a speedy conclusion by its being carried on with energy well directed. But such has not been the case, nor will it ever be so, as long as generals are made in the counting-house and soldiers on farms.

As to dear Sargie's education, it is impossible for me to advise you, ignorant as I am of his disposition and character. I would not force him; I would rather he grew up ignorant than have his temper destroyed by unnecessary exertions at his early age. As to what any other child does is a matter for its parents, and not us; I would never bring up a child on any model, for children are as different from each other as is the sun from the moon, and what may be very proper for one is the ruin of another.

I forgot to mention that Major Graham was sent by General Taylor to communicate the termination of the armistice to the Mexican army. It was hoped he would have advanced beyond Saltillo, and thus had an opportunity of reconnoitering the road, but I understand he returned last night, having found persons at Saltillo, waiting for him, who received his despatches.

MONTEREY, *November 13, 1846.*

I take advantage of the return of Major Graham to give you intelligence of my movements and of our affairs here. General Taylor was to have gone day before yesterday to Saltillo, and I to accompany him, as I told you in my last letter; but the day previous an express came direct from Matamoras, across the country, with a note from Robert McLane, saying he had arrived at Matamoras, bearer of despatches to the General, which radically modified those sent by Major Graham, that, it not being deemed prudent for him to cross the country, he sent the note to advise the General, and would himself come by the usual route up the river to Camargo. The General postponed all movements till after his arrival, and we were in a state of great excitement for two days. Major Graham's despatches ordered an immediate advance into the enemy's country, and a radical modification was presumed by many to be a peaceable measure; others, again, thought it was a change of direction to Vera Cruz; and many were the surmises, the hopes, and the fears, upon the occasion. Yesterday Master Bob made his appearance, and all that has transpired is the reordering of the movements upon Saltillo.

General Worth left this morning with three regiments of regulars and one field battery of artillery (about one thousand men). General Taylor will go in a few hours, escorted by about two hundred and fifty dragoons, and I shall accompany him.

Captain Linnard arrived day before yesterday, but is very sick with a congestive fever, and unable to attend to any duty.

The General, I understand, simply proposes to go to Saltillo to see the place; probably I shall be sent to make a reconnoissance in advance of it, in the direction of San Luis, and then he will return here, and I suppose go to Tampico. Before the arrival of Captain Linnard he said he should require my services at Tampico, but now I do not know my destination, and as General Worth, who is to be left at Saltillo, is all the time applying for me, I should not be surprised were I left with him.

The purport of McLane's despatches is not known, but from all I can gather, the modification consists in orders to desist operating on the line of San Luis farther than Saltillo, then to take Tampico, after which, my notion is, we shall go to Vera Cruz. However, before Tampico is reduced, both the Mexican and American Congress will have met, and things may be changed.

I have met a great loss in my friend Lieutenant Scarritt, Corps of Engineers, who is obliged to leave the country on account of ill health. We have been associated together for a long time, and fought together on the 8th and 9th of May, and here. He is a good soldier and a fine gentleman, and I shall feel much the loss of his society. I have told him, should he go to the North, to find you out in Philadelphia, and that you would know all about him.

MONTEREY, *November 24, 1846.*

My last letter was dated on the 13th instant, and was written just on the eve of my departure for Saltillo. Major Graham promised to take it with him, so I presume it will reach you in safety. Also Robert McLane, who said he was going direct to Philadelphia, promised to call and see you on his arrival, and tell you all about me. You, therefore, will be in better luck than myself, for I suppose you will receive all my letters, and have verbal accounts of me, whereas I find on my return no mails have arrived in my absence, and to-night, letters for others, as late as the 31st of October, without any for me, my last date being the 9th of October. I know, of course, you have written, and attribute my misfortune to the negligence of the postmasters between here and Matamoras, who seem to do just as they please about forwarding the letters of officers. Some kind friend on the route has imagined I have gone to Tampico, or that I am killed perhaps, and that there is no necessity to send my letters forward; there must be some such reason as this, the fact being I receive no letters, and know I ought to get them.

We had a very pleasant trip to Saltillo, making it in four marches. The road passes through a valley for nearly the whole distance, having an average breadth of some six miles. This valley is without water, and very barren, the mountains rising on each side to the height of some two thousand feet, forming a grand, though gloomy picture. About half-way, some thirty miles from here, we came to the famous pass of the Rinconada, so much talked of previous to our march to Monterey, and where we were to have another Thermopylæ. We found the pass naturally very strong; but the works the Mexicans had commenced were so injudiciously placed that we could, I think, have carried them without much difficulty. Then the pass could have been turned on both sides, and by turning it, we could have cut off the supply of water from the troops occupying it, as the nearest water is six miles in rear of the pass. The Mexicans, therefore, very wisely abandoned it, and, indeed, this bugbear, like all preceding it, turns out to be a trifling affair, after all.

We found Saltillo a very pretty place, though not so beautifully situated as Monterey. It is built on the side of a hill, or piece of table-land, which traverses the valley at this point. The top of the table-land is an extensive plain, rocky and barren. The town is laid out in squares, after the fashion of all Mexican towns, with a grand plaza, having on one side the Cathedral. This building is very fine, having attached to it five chapels, all with magnificent altar-pieces. The Catholic Churches of Mexico are entirely different from those of Europe. The altar-pieces, as they are called, consist of the most elaborate wood-work, gilded, which occupies the whole wall of the church (against which is placed the altar), from the floor to the ceiling. It looks, to one accustomed to more chaste ornaments, like gingerbread work; but when you see a wall, some forty or fifty feet high, covered with this mass of gold (apparently), worked into columns, pilasters, etc., having niches in which are placed figures the size of life, representing our Saviour, the apostles, saints and others, the evening sun shining on it has an effect you cannot but consider grand, even though a studied criticism would pronounce it gaudy.

In the Cathedral of Saltillo we saw a great number of wax figures, the size of life, used upon various occasions, such as the dead Christ, our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico; our Lady of Grief, whose assistance is always invoked in time of affliction. Some of these are well executed, but the greater part look like big wax-dolls, causing no sensation but that of ridicule. Then there is a

great deal of bad taste displayed in painting curtains on the walls, instead of having rich drapery, in wooden candelabra, gaudily painted, such as you see at a circus, hanging alongside of magnificent silver ones; and all such things as these, constant steps from the sublime to the ridiculous. Still, upon the whole, the imagination is affected on entering one of these large buildings (the proportions of which are generally good), when it is filled with a crowd of devotees, male and female, the grand altar crowded with priests and assistants, the organ pealing forth the music of the Church, and all seemingly in sincere devotion.

Besides the Cathedral, there are four other chapels, attached to monasteries. These I did not see, not having time, for the General sent me on a reconnoissance the day after our arrival, and I was absent on it three days, going about twenty-five miles in front of Saltillo, keeping up my reputation of always being among those who penetrate farthest into the country. I went to examine some mountain passes where, we were given to understand, we should all be cut up; but I found them simple affairs, no obstacles whatever, as, even should the enemy attempt to hold them, they could be turned in various directions.

Upon my return from the reconnoissance, the General returned to this place, so that I had but little time to examine Saltillo. We found the town very full of people, none having left it but the government employees, who were ordered to do so. In consequence of this we found many of the better class of Mexicans whom we had not hitherto seen. Generally their deportment was not so humble as at Monterey, and they attempted to extort exorbitant prices for the supplies the General demanded of them; but the old gentleman treated them without ceremony, and he ordered to be seized all the supplies that were in the town, ascertained their owners, and then offered them the market prices previous to our arrival, or nothing at all. They very wisely determined to take his prices, and there the affair ended.

While here he received a reply from Santa Anna to his communication announcing the cessation of the armistice. It is a very diplomatic note, in which he tells the General that, "whether the terms of the capitulation were founded upon the *necessity of the case*, or upon the noble motive (as the General says they were) of opening the door for negotiations, he can assure him it is needless to *think of peace* while an armed North American treads the soil of Mexico, or an armed

vessel threatens her coast; *however*, that the National Congress will meet in a few weeks, and upon that august body will devolve the responsibility of arranging this question." This is evidently for "Bunkum," about the armed North Americans, for Santa Anna knows well enough that no government in the world would withdraw its troops in time of war, to await negotiations, and his reference to the Congress evidently indicates, to my mind, that he is acting in good faith, and is himself desirous of peace.

My views of Santa Anna are the same now as expressed to you from Seralvo, when I first heard of his return. *If he can*, he will make peace; but he must first establish himself firmly in power, and it is idle for those in Washington to have expected him to make peace and barter away the territory of the nation the moment he set his foot upon the soil, and because he did not do so, accuse him of treachery, through the public journals. We have undoubted information of his having already collected some thirty-five thousand men at San Luis, while they are busy fortifying. But I doubt if he will advance from there, and my impression is that this large army is intended more for his own purposes, and against his own people than against us.

MONTEREY, *November 27, 1846.*

An extraordinary express being about to start for Camargo, I take advantage of it to send you a few lines, giving you intelligence of my movements up to the latest date.

General Taylor has received official communication from Commodore Perry, announcing the occupation of Tampico, on the 14th instant, by a portion of the squadron under his command, and asking that a garrison from the army may be sent to relieve the seamen and mariners now occupying the place. Some fifteen hundred or two thousand men, with a large supply of heavy and light artillery, were immediately despatched from Matamoras, and we may now consider ourselves in full possession of the line of the Sierra Madre. What change this will make in our operations is not yet known. Of course, there is no necessity for General Taylor to go to Tampico with so large a column as he had intended taking when resistance was expected, but I am under the impression now that he will go as far as Victoria, a town on the road from here to Tampico, and about two hundred and fifty miles from this place, and one hundred from Tampico. In going down this road he will take possession of the towns of Caideretta, Linares and others, examine the passes through the

mountains, of which there are said to be several, though only mule-paths, and ascertain in person the truth of a report recently brought to us, that General Urrea is at Victoria with a considerable force, constituting an army of observation.

The abandonment of Tampico is a sign of weakness on the part of the enemy, though it is good policy, if Santa Anna was doubtful of his power to hold it. His position, his life, all, depend on his first effort, whether offensive or defensive, being successful, and he had better abandon half the country to us than attempt resistance and be defeated, for this would be his ruin.

Our latest intelligence from San Luis was brought by some Texan prisoners, taken on our march from Camargo here, and released by Santa Anna, on the application of General Taylor, who released four commissioned officers and one hundred men, taken during the affair here, without exchanges and without pledges.

These prisoners say Santa Anna has some twenty-seven thousand men at San Luis, that they are fortifying the place, but the rumor is that he will give us battle in an open plain some fifteen miles this side, and in case of defeat, not presumed by them within the range of possibility, he will retire upon the town. The great idea is to cut us up with masses of cavalry. Such good luck as meeting them in the open plain is, I fear, not in store for us. As to their cavalry, they know too well the capacity of our light artillery to attempt anything of that kind; indeed, we have the most perfectly secure feelings, as far as their cavalry is concerned; but I fear the want of water on the road will prevent our advance on San Luis, the more to be regretted because I firmly believe that could we get there now, and take the place, as I am sure we would, the road would be open to the City of Mexico.

The journals in the United States do not seem to appreciate the value of the victory of Monterey. By the battles of the Palo Alto and Resaca, the enemy were forced to retire to the Sierra Madre, some two hundred miles from the Rio Grande, but by the defeat at Monterey they have been compelled to retire to San Luis, distant four hundred miles, leaving open to us more than one-half the whole Republic, and I am certain that could we defeat them at San Luis, three hundred miles from the capital, our road would be open to it.

It is probably for the best as it is, for the delay will give time for the Mexican Congress to meet, and it is not impossible that it may have the good sense to accept the offers of peace of the United States.

MONTEREY, *December 2, 1846.*

I did not write by the last mail, being very much occupied in making some drawings for General Taylor, which he desired to send by the mail; but I wrote you a day or two before, by a private opportunity.

The volunteers have been creating disturbances, which have at last aroused the old General so much that he has ordered one regiment, the First Kentucky foot, to march to the rear, as they have disgraced themselves and their State.

The amount of the story is this: Some few days ago, a party of volunteers, to what regiment attached unknown, went into a house in the suburbs of the town, and after forcibly driving out the husband, committed outrages on the wife. A day or two afterwards, a Kentucky volunteer was found in the morning with his throat cut, supposed to have been done by the outraged husband as an act of retaliation. The same day two Mexicans were shot while working in a corn-field, said to have been done by Kentucky volunteers, in revenge. The next day another Kentuckian was brought into camp with his throat cut, and several more Mexicans were shot. The General in the meantime had brought the thing to the notice of all the volunteer regiments, giving strict orders that no man should be allowed to go out with arms, and impressed upon the officers the necessity of controlling the men and putting a stop to these outrages, which would inevitably end in the massacre of many innocent persons.

It came to his notice, however, that the Kentucky regiment, notwithstanding his orders, had left its camp, in squads of twenty and thirty, all armed, and avowing their intention of killing Mexicans, to revenge their murdered comrades, and the same day one man, a Mexican, was shot within a hundred yards of the camp, and a little boy of twelve years of age, who was cutting cornstalks to bring to the camp for sale, was shot in the field and his leg broken. This poor little fellow, all bleeding and crying, was brought by his relatives and laid down in front of the General's tent, and he called out to look at him. Of course, the General was much excited, and as he could only ascertain that armed parties of Kentuckians had gone out, he told the colonel of the regiment that he held him and his officers responsible, and ordered them to the rear in disgrace. Afterwards, however, intercession was made, and on their making promises to endeavor to find out the guilty individuals, and promising to prevent such things

in future, the old man countermanded the order. The giving of it, however, had the effect of completely stopping the outrages for the present; but the well-wishers of our cause would have been glad to see him disband the whole regiment and send them home as a disgrace to the army and their State. It would have had a most beneficial effect upon the volunteers.

You know I am not one of those regular soldiers who have all their lives gotten up and gone to bed at the sound of the drum, and who are filled with all the prejudices of an exclusive class, and look upon all but regular troops with contempt, and never see any good in volunteers. I am more of a *juste milieu* man; being a regular, but having at the same time mixed much with civilians, and knowing the impracticability of ever having regulars only, I am desirous of seeing all the good I can in volunteers, and, if possible, so modifying the system as to make what we must have useful.

The volunteers have in this war, on the whole, behaved better than I had believed they would, and infinitely better than they did in the Florida war, under my own eye. Still, without a modification of the manner in which they are officered, they are almost useless in an offensive war. They are sufficiently well-drilled for practical purposes, and are, I believe, brave, and will fight as gallantly as any men, but they are a set of Goths and Vandals, without discipline, laying waste the country wherever we go, making us a terror to innocent people, and if there is any spirit or energy in the Mexicans, will finally rouse the people against us, who now are perfectly neutral. In addition to which, they add immensely to the expenses of the war. They cannot take any care of themselves; the hospitals are crowded with them, they die like sheep; they waste their provisions, requiring twice as much to supply them as regulars do. They plunder the poor inhabitants of everything they can lay their hands on, and shoot them when they remonstrate, and if one of their number happens to get into a drunken brawl and is killed, they run over the country, killing all the poor innocent people they find in their way, to avenge, as they say, the murder of their brother.

This is a true picture, and the cause is the utter incapacity of their officers to control them or command respect. The officers (many of whom are gentlemen and clever fellows) have no command over their men. They know they are in service for only twelve months; at the end of that time they will return to their homes, when these men will be their equals and their companions, as they

had been before, and in consequence they dare not attempt to exercise any control over them. Then, for the most part, they are as ignorant of their duties as the men, and conscious of their ignorance, they feel they cannot have the command over their people that the regular officers do over their soldiers.

Now, the remedy I would propose would be to attach to every regiment of volunteers a colonel, lieutenant colonel, ten captains and twenty sergeants, with two hundred men, from the regular army. Let these officers have the brevet rank of their respective grades, so as to keep them in the army. Let the colonel be taken from the lieutenant colonels, and the captains from the lieutenants. The army can well spare these officers, for it is organized for such a purpose. Then in each regiment you would have enough practical knowledge to give a tone to it, and the volunteer regiments would soon be as efficient as regular troops. But, as it is, the generals know no more than the privates, and it is only by attaching regular officers, as staff officers, that they get along at all.

But I am afraid you will be tired of this digression about volunteers, a subject that must be uninteresting to you, but not so to us, whose lives and reputations are dependent upon their actions. I have been led to make it from my seeing by the papers that a war is about being waged between the volunteers and regulars as to their respective efficiency, and that the volunteers have begun by accusing the regulars of showing the white feather on the 21st at the north-east end of the town.

The truth is, that the regulars, by their attack, caused the enemy to evacuate the battery taken on that day by the Mississippians and Tennesseans, though, no doubt, their movements were accelerated by seeing the column of volunteers advancing from the front. An unfortunate error, as afterwards was ascertained, occurred in the regulars *going to the right, instead of to the left*, and after entering the town, owing to an ignorance of the locality, and finding the enemy strong in their front and right, they attempted, as it is called, to out-flank them, or turn their right, but soon found they had an insurmountable obstacle in their front, in a stream that could only be crossed by two bridges that were strongly fortified, and after sustaining a terrible fire, they retired. A portion, however, under Captain Backus, First Infantry, went *to the left*, and in so doing got on top of a house, from whence they could fire into the rear of the battery, and did fire into the rear, killing a great many Mexicans,

and annoying them so that they evacuated the work as soon as they saw the volunteers in front, and long before they (the volunteers) reached the work. Now, had the whole attacking force (regular) turned to the left, they would have taken the work before the volunteers had reached the scene of action. As it is, the fall of the battery is due to the action of both, but chiefly to the regulars; for had no attack been made by them, the volunteers could never have taken the battery from the front, for they would have been cut to pieces in attempting it. But had the volunteers not attacked it in front, the regulars, who had ascertained their error, would soon have taken it in reverse, or from the rear. Do you understand me? If so, I should like you to show this part of my letter to Major Bache, who will doubtless see the contest going on in the papers among the letter-writers.

Already has the colonel of the Tennessee regiment (Colonel Campbell), in whose favor, by-the-by, I was very much prepossessed from his appearance, written a letter, in which he says he "was ordered to sustain the regulars, but on reaching the ground saw no regulars, and could not ascertain where they were, but understood they were behind stone walls and houses, protecting themselves; and he, being subjected to a heavy cross-fire from batteries (which he understood the regulars were to take and he sustain them in it), he, without waiting for the regulars, dashed ahead, and took the battery himself." Now this seems very plausible, but when he does not know where the regulars were, I can tell him they were in the town, subjected to the fire of two additional batteries and many thousand muskets, which they were returning with good effect, and that a portion of them were killing the men in the battery which he took, as fast as they could load their muskets; and had they not been there, he would never have taken the work, for the enemy would have stood to their guns till he reached them, *and in the two hundred yards he went over without being fired at* would have been a terrible fire of grape and cannister, besides musketry, that would, or at least might have annihilated his force or made it turn back.

The credit is due to both. The regulars had driven the enemy's infantry from a large space on the left of the battery, which would have been otherwise occupied, to the annoyance of the volunteers coming from the front, and before the volunteers reached within charging distance, the regulars had commenced killing the men in the work, and would eventually have caused them to evacuate it,

but they, seeing the volunteers forming in front, took a few shots at them and then ran. This is the true secret of the taking of *that* battery.

The volunteers behaved most gallantly, but it is folly for them to take the whole credit to themselves, and still greater folly to attempt to insinuate that the regulars did not do their duty. The list of killed and wounded conclusively demonstrates who were in the hottest fire, and the poor regulars did but little in their efforts to *protect themselves*, when we see that at that attack some fifteen officers were killed and wounded, and some two hundred and fifty men, out of a force of not much over six hundred. Colonel Campbell's letter had induced me to say this much about the affair, that you may fully understand it.

I regret to say the letter-writers have created a great ferment in the camp. The fact is that there never were such ridiculous and absurd letters written as have emanated from this great army since the battles. All that I have read have been a tissue of nonsense and falsehoods, so palpably absurd as to make me laugh, though others are greatly annoyed. For instance, I see one Captain —— and Lieutenant —— did wonders in the way of killing Mexicans, whereas it is well known that Captain —— behaved in a most equivocal manner, having been found in a *quarry-hole, with his whole company, fifty men, guarding* one poor Mexican prisoner, and harsh words had to be used to him before he could be gotten out of the hole, which was way in the rear of the fighting, but where he was protected from the artillery sweeping the plain.

As to Lieutenant ——, he was not in the fight at all, having been left at camp to guard the baggage. This is a fair specimen of the accuracy of most of the letter-writers.

All you see about Generals Taylor and Butler is humbug; no difficulty ever occurred between them, and General Butler behaved most handsomely. After he was wounded and brought back to camp, he became a little nervous at reports of the approach of the enemy's cavalry, and in consequence made some barricades out of the wagons, tents and baggage. They were considered a little absurd and unnecessary, and particularly annoying to those who, after having gone through the day's hard work, found, on getting to camp, their tents all taken up and piled up with their baggage to make a defense against cavalry, and this, too, in a thick wood, on a dark night, when it would be hard for cavalry to get through quietly.

Still, this was a precautionary measure he deemed proper to take, and though we may criticise his judgment, his courage is beyond dispute. Besides, General Taylor never censured anything he did, nor did any act of his require it.

So also it is altogether wrong, that General Quitman brought on the attack on the morning of the twenty-third, to the disgust of General Taylor. On the contrary, General Taylor gave him full power to do whatever he thought proper, and after he had commenced the attack, immediately sustained him with his whole force.

I regret also to state that Lieutenant Pope, of my corps, *did not discover a battery one day, and lead the column of attack the next*, and "that, if his gallantry was the theme of admiration to the whole army," the army never knew it till after the letter so stating the fact came back in the papers. Lieutenant Pope behaved very well, and did his duty, but nothing more than all the rest of the army did. All this, however, is strictly *entre nous*. I thank heaven you never published any of my letters, and I trust your discretion will ever continue, for there are so many cliques, factions, and parties, among regulars and volunteers, that it is almost impossible to write without giving offence to some. And as my letters are simply intended for your information, I wish to be perfectly free to say just what I think, without reference to others.

I was exceedingly unfortunate in never paying any attention to the well-known correspondents of different newspapers, many of whom accompanied General Worth's column. For this reason my extraordinary performances have not reached your ear through the public prints. I think, however, the Dear Public will be sadly puzzled to reconcile the thousand conflicting statements, and will finally have to throw themselves on the official reports, where alone is accuracy, divested of bombast and falsehood, to be found. They are doubtless before you by this time, and I trust you will be satisfied with the mention that is made of me in them. I assure you I am. To have it said that I have done my duty is all I ask, and I have no hesitation in saying, without mock modesty, that General Worth has been pleased to say of me more than I really deserved.

December 5.

Our affairs remain pretty much *in statu quo*. An express was to-day received from General Worth at Saltillo, forwarding a letter from Santa Anna. This was a reply to General Taylor's communica-

Part of the War in Mexico. -

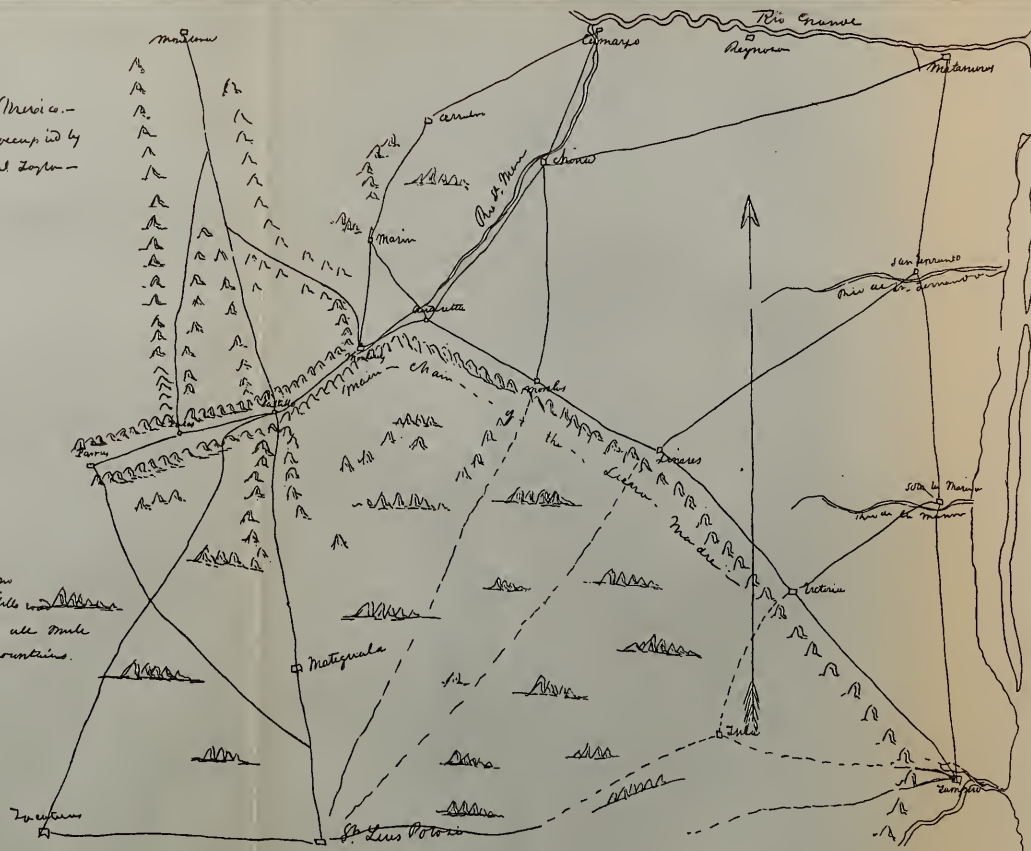
Parras to Potos 50 miles
Potos to Saltillo 40
Saltillo to Monterrey 60

Monthly to Card net	25
To Mowder	40
To Linarez	40
To Victorine	100
To Harmonie	150

Saltella to P. Luis	250
Metanom to P. Luis	200
Lampyris to P. Luis	300
Phantomas to Camargo	100
L. Manting	260
L. Lampyris	300
Phonolara to Camargo	250
" " Saltella	150

— Wagon roads
- - - - - Mule paths -

From Pt. Luis going north there is no
practicable ^{road} for a very east grade ^{no} hills 
The other roads from Pt. Luis are all double
paths where they pass the mountains.



SKETCH OF THE SEAT OF THE WAR IN MEXICO SHOWING THE LINE PROPOSED TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE AMERICAN FORCES UNDER GENERAL TAYLOR
(FAC-SIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL. SEE PAGE 168)

tion from Saltillo. "He agrees with General Taylor on our construction of the terms of the armistice, repeats his opinion that there can be no peace as long as our army occupies the territory of Mexico, but again says that the Congress will meet on the first of this month, and will act as best suits the high interests of the country." General Worth writes that he had sent a confidential agent to San Luis, a Mexican, who had returned, having had a private interview with Santa Anna, in which Santa Anna told him he would do all in his power to bring about a peace. This may or may not be his intention. Many think it is, and that the Congress will make peace, if it can do so with anything like honor, but I regret to say I am skeptical. The Mexicans are so little guided by their true interests, are so vain and arrogant, learn so little from the past, and are so sanguine of the future, that I fear such happy times as peace would bring are yet far off. Still, there is a hope, and so anxious am I for the result, that as long as there is a hope, I will indulge in the delusion that a few weeks may prove vain.

I fear that before we have peace, we must be a little more courteous and civil to Great Britain, through whose mediation I look for it; and we must be less exacting in our demands upon Mexico, which will hardly be brought, by anything we have yet done, to despoil herself of nearly one-third of her vast domain.

MONTEREY, *December 8, 1846.*

Since writing my last letter I have been made happy by the receipt of your letters from the 1st to the 7th of November, by which time my long letter giving an account of the battle had reached you. I feel very much complimented by your kind notice of my narrative; you would make some allowances, if you only knew how I was situated when I wrote it. It was at General Worth's table, where there must have been some eight or ten officers talking, and others constantly coming in and going out, and I was so often interrupted, I had to sit up till two o'clock to finish it. The sketch was most miserable, but I knew it was better than nothing, to illustrate the various positions; and without something, you could hardly get a clear idea of the affair. At the time, too, I had not had an opportunity of conversing fully with officers engaged on General Taylor's side of the town, and I may have been led into errors, which the official reports will correct.

The correspondent of the "Spirit of the Times," G. de L., is Cap-

tain Henry, of the Third Infantry, a classmate of mine at West Point, a very good fellow, and I notice his recent productions since our march from Camargo have been quite spirited. His account of the battle has not yet reached here, and I cannot therefore vouch for its accuracy. He was one of the individuals who wagered with me on a fight, and I had the good fortune to win a forage-cup from him, as I did a box of cigars from another, and one of wine from a third. This, I suppose, you will say was very bad in me, but in war times soldiers will be bad fellows, and you must pardon me on the score of my confession.

I enclose you a rough sketch which will give you some idea of the relative positions of various places about to be occupied and garrisoned by our forces, and will enable you better, and particularly your dear father, to understand what is going on. I have only put down the principal towns and roads; there are an immense number of ranchos, as they are called, and numerous trails and mule-paths joining them, but the only good wagon roads, or the lines on which it is practicable to move with wagons and artillery, I have put down.

The troops as now stationed are as follows: General Wool, with two thousand five hundred men (one thousand five hundred foot and one thousand horse) and eight pieces of artillery, is now at Parras, having been ordered there from Monclova, at which place he was stopped by General Taylor, on account of the armistice. General Worth is at Saltillo, where he will soon have a force of about two thousand five hundred men and eight pieces of artillery. Major General Butler will remain here, with about one thousand five hundred men and a large quantity of artillery. This will make about six thousand men and over sixteen pieces of artillery that could be united at Saltillo, under General Butler, in the event of Santa Anna's advancing in this direction. This force is ample to hold him in check. The only danger to be apprehended is his not giving them time to concentrate.

One thousand men have been sent and are by this time at Tampico, with twenty pieces of artillery of various calibre. Among these one thousand are five hundred regulars, of the artillery, under the command of Colonel Belton.

General Taylor will move from here in a few days, with about two thousand five hundred men and eight pieces of artillery, to go by Morelos and Linares to Victoria. He will pick up on the route the Second Infantry, now at Morelos, numbering five hundred men,

and at Victoria he will be joined by General Patterson, from Matamoras, with over two thousand men. General Taylor's object is to examine the various mountain passes between this and Victoria, to garrison the principal points, leaving a large garrison at Victoria, which, with the one at Tampico, will make a force to meet Santa Anna, should he advance from San Luis in that direction. But he can only carry infantry and cavalry by that route, as there is no practicable road for artillery through the mountains from San Luis but the one to Saltillo.

I have above disposed of twelve thousand men; there remain some two thousand besides, who garrison the depots in the rear, namely, Seralvo, Camargo and Matamoras, and after the occupation of Victoria, Soto Marina will also be made a depot, as there is a pretty good harbor, where small vessels can enter.

I see the "Union" states that General Taylor has twenty thousand men. We here cannot make out over fourteen thousand, a small number to hold a line of over five hundred miles against an enemy with thirty thousand men.

You will observe that San Luis is a central point, from whence, had Santa Anna only roads over which he could carry artillery, he might annoy us very much, but I doubt his advancing beyond San Luis, unless he thinks he can get a chance to catch one of our detachments by itself, when the hope of success may lead him on. All his forces are at present at San Luis said to amount to thirty thousand. He has an advance of two thousand at Matejuala, on the lookout for our approach. I only wish there was water on the road sufficient for the army, and that we could march with fifteen thousand men. I would then be satisfied of our perfect success at San Luis, and on its falling, the road to the City of Mexico would be open to us, and we should march to that place without opposition. As it is, we have not ten thousand men to march with, and there is no water on the road. Under these circumstances this line from Parras to Tampico will be occupied, and if the Mexican Congress refuse peace, it will be permanently annexed to the United States, and Mexico told to come and take it. Then, if further offensive operations are deemed necessary, Vera Cruz will have to be attacked and taken.

What is thought of the naval attack on Tobasco? I have not seen the official account, but it appears to be the impression that they did not do as much as they might have done. If they cannot take a town with only three hundred soldiers in it, and no artillery, what are they going to do against San Juan de Ulloa?

General Taylor will leave in a few days for Victoria, and I shall go with him. I will write you again before I leave.

MONTEMORELOS, *December 18, 1846.*

We left Monterey on the 15th instant, and after a pleasant march of three days reached this place yesterday afternoon. The command consisted of about one thousand two hundred regulars, under General Twiggs, and two thousand volunteer infantry, under General Quitman, of Mississippi. General Taylor and all his staff accompanied the command, and it was General Taylor's plan to go down to Victoria, examine all the mountain passes and the communications to the sea; then, after leaving the volunteers at Victoria, he was to return to Saltillo. We all were anticipating a pleasant excursion of six weeks, and looking forward with some interest to the Mexican Congress, hoping for peace, but last night an express reached here, informing us that Santa Anna was advancing on Saltillo, understanding that General Taylor was going to Victoria, and hoping by rapid marches to surprise Worth, and then attack Wool, and after using both up in detail, to advance on Monterey.

General Taylor, though loth to believe the intelligence, still deemed it his duty to act as if it were true, and in consequence left this morning with all the regulars, except one battery of artillery, which goes to Victoria with General Quitman. At Victoria, General Quitman will be joined by General Patterson, with one thousand five hundred men, who will take command of the line from Victoria to Tampico. General Taylor will push on to Saltillo, where he expects to find Worth and Wool united, which, with his force, will make over five thousand men, with twenty pieces of artillery; and if Santa Anna is so bold as to make the attempt, he will most assuredly meet with a signal defeat, I do not care what force he brings.

General Taylor, being very anxious to know the nature of the mountain passes, has detached me to go with General Quitman to Victoria, where, upon meeting General Patterson, I shall be furnished with an escort of cavalry, and will then reconnoitre the whole country in front of the line of Tampico and this place.

I cannot tell you with how sad a heart I saw all my old associates and companions march away this morning, for I am left here with only five regular officers, and of the two thousand volunteers, I do not know a dozen. Then, to think that they are hurrying on with the expectation of having another battle, at which I shall not be present! Little as I like fighting, it is still a great disappointment.

But there are great advantages in my position. I shall be the senior and only officer of my corps with General Patterson; the duty I am charged with is most important and honorable, and had I returned with General Taylor, when we united with the troops at Saltillo, there would be seven Topographical Engineers, among whom I would have ranked fourth, making a great difference in my position. Then, again, we are not without hopes of active service here, for it is said there are five thousand Mexicans at Tula, under General Urrea, he having concentrated his army of observation there; and when he finds there are only three thousand volunteers at Victoria, he may try his luck with us, which I sincerely trust he will, for we shall give him a sound thrashing if he makes the attempt.

I must confess the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Still I feel very much the separation from General Taylor and all the regulars. The old man was very kind to me on parting, and said he would recollect, if anything turned up in the way of peace, that I was the first to join him, and had been with him ever since.

If Santa Anna's advance be true, it must be based on the refusal of the Mexican Congress to negotiate, and we may therefore look for a long war; but I still hope it is a mere feint to occupy the attention of his own people, who are loudly complaining of his having abandoned Tampico, and of his want of energy in not advancing on us. Indeed, his position is very critical, and almost desperate. If he advance, he is sure to be defeated, when he will be ruined forever; and if he delay, he will be overthrown by his enemies, who are only awaiting a plausible pretext to declare against him; a few weeks will show.

The country we have passed over has been quite beautiful. We pass along the foot of the high mountains (as the sketch in my last letter indicated to you), over a rich plain, well cultivated and thickly settled. We expect to reach Linares, in two days' marching, tomorrow, and it will then take us some eight days to go to Victoria. From Victoria I may go down to Soto la Marina and to Tampico. There is one bad thing about it; Heaven only knows when I shall get your letters. But I will write to you by every chance.

VICTORIA, MEXICO, *December 30, 1846.*

We reached this place yesterday, after a pleasant and agreeable march of some seventeen days. I wrote to you on the 18th instant from Montemorelos, advising you of my having been detached with

General Quitman, to come and examine the mountain passes, and that General Taylor, with the main body, had gone to Saltillo to meet Santa Anna, who was said to be advancing.

We had quite a peaceable march, till within three days of this place, when we heard that troops had reached Victoria from Tula, in advance of us, and we should meet with resistance. As usual, in similar cases, their numbers were greatly exaggerated. The enemy were reported to be some seven thousand strong, with six pieces of artillery. We had but two thousand, with four pieces, and they all volunteers.

Of General Patterson, whom we expected to meet with fifteen hundred men, nothing could be heard, and for a while things looked blue; but, much to our gratification, the advance guard of the enemy retired before us, and when within a few miles of Victoria, intelligence reached us that they had all retired to the mountains. It turned out that they only had fifteen hundred cavalry in the place, which were the advance of the army they intended to bring against us; but finding it impracticable to get their artillery over the mountains, they withdrew their advance, and now they say they will not fight this side of the mountains.

We have no intelligence from Saltillo. It is generally understood that Santa Anna sent his army forward upon Saltillo, but nothing further is known, and we are looking with interest for the result.

I do not think there will be any fighting here, unless we advance on Tula, when we will meet with resistance; but I will explain this more fully hereafter.

General Patterson is said to be within fifty miles of this place; he has lost all the honor of the taking of Victoria by being behind.

I am in perfect health, and thought much of you and our dear children on Christmas Day; nor have I forgotten that to-morrow is our wedding day, and that I have been happy for six years.

VICTORIA, MEXICO, *January 7, 1847.*

A few days after our arrival, General Quitman sent me to reconnoitre the road to Tula, as far as a little place called Las Minas, and where the enemy were said to have their advance. I went with only twenty men, mounted on sorry ponies, as we had no cavalry of any kind; but, meeting a Mexican on the way, who told us the enemy had retired beyond the mountains, I advanced in perfect

security as far as Las Minas, and had the men been provided with rations, would have gone beyond. It was well I did not, for on my return I found the rascally Mexican had deceived me, and that I was within six miles of one hundred and fifty Mexicans. The object of my expedition was, however, fully accomplished—the examination of the road—and I satisfied myself that the road was impracticable for wagons or artillery. The next day, the enemy being reported in our vicinity in another direction, I went out with my small party to examine, and ascertained it was a false report.

Three days ago, much to our astonishment, General Taylor made his appearance with Twiggs's division of two thousand regulars, and at the same time General Patterson reached here with sixteen hundred men from Matamoras, making our force here nearly six thousand men.

General Taylor, on reaching Monterey, found the report of Santa Anna's advance was false, and he turned right around with his whole force and came here. For what object, no one knows, is so large a force assembled at this point. To be sure, the enemy occupy Tula in strong force, but there is no practicable road for our artillery and wagons to Tula, and if we do take Tula, we still have to take San Luis, some eighty miles distant from Tula, before we can penetrate into the interior; whereas from Saltillo we have a good road for heavy artillery to San Luis, and when we take that, Tula will fall without a blow.

It is reported that General Scott is in the country, and is to organize an expedition against Vera Cruz, and it may be that the force here, or a part of it, is destined for that place. A few days will show.

Generals Worth and Wool have concentrated at Saltillo, and all the volunteers from the Rio Grande have been brought up, so that there is at present under General Butler's command at that place some six thousand men and eighteen pieces of artillery, ready to receive Santa Anna, should he advance, which I hardly think he will.

From Mexico we have but little news. The Congress is occupied in the election of a President, and has not yet acted on the proposition of peace. I have seen papers to the 19th of December from the City of Mexico. Their tone is war to the last, but at the same time despondent; and instead of driving us across the Sabine,¹ they talk of their capacity to defend themselves at San Luis and Tula. I understand that the provisional President, Salus, in his message to

¹ The Sabine River empties into the Gulf of Mexico, sixty miles above Galveston, and is the eastern boundary line of Texas.

the Congress, says that the Government is for prosecuting the war vigorously, but it is for Congress to say whether or not they shall treat for peace; that if the war is continued, extraordinary means must be resorted to, to raise the necessary funds, for that now the Treasury is bankrupt, and the troops without pay, clothing, or subsistence. Under these circumstances, I do not see how they can long continue the war, and one or two efficient blows on our part may bring them to their senses. Their blindness is incomprehensible, and what they expect by continuing the war is more than I can imagine.

General Patterson brought with him the President's (ours) message, by which I see he proposes to keep the country we have conquered, as a remuneration for the expenses of the war. This will do more to bring about a peace than many battles.

General Taylor's column brought a mail with it, in which came your letter of the 14th of November, at which time you had received mine on the subject of my promotion. General Worth has recommended me for a brevet, but it was in a letter to General Scott, written in the early part of December, and I fear did not reach Washington till after General Scott's departure. As soon as he is called on, however, to do so officially, he will do it again, for, unrequested on my part, he told me he should use all possible exertion to secure my promotion.

I also received the notice of the meeting of the good citizens of Philadelphia, proposing to present swords to those officers from Philadelphia who had distinguished themselves on the 8th and 9th of May. If I should be included in this category, I should deem it a high honor.

TAMPICO, *January 24, 1847.*

You will be somewhat surprised, probably, to hear of my being in this place, as doubtless the newspapers will give you the information of the return of General Taylor to Monterey, and you will expect me to have gone with him. I last wrote you from Victoria, where I had gone with General Quitman's command, and where we were joined by General Taylor, with Twiggs's division of regulars.

General Taylor, after waiting for some days for communications from General Scott, who, he was informed, was in the country somewhere, determined to take his force down to Tampico for supplies, and await General Scott's orders at that point. Accordingly, on the 15th instant, General Twiggs's command left Victoria, and I was as-

signed to it, as it was in the advance. The second day's march we were overtaken by an express from General Taylor, informing us that communications had been received after our departure from General Scott, that he called for *all the regular troops* and one-half the volunteers of General Taylor's command; that General Taylor, thus stripped, was to return to Monterey and Saltillo, to defend that line, and General Scott was to operate on the Mexican coast, or, in other words, attack Vera Cruz. In the orders communicating this intelligence I was ordered to report to Major General Patterson, on reaching Tampico, who was to be in command till General Scott's arrival.

At first I deemed, as I suppose you will, this a piece of ill-luck; but when I ascertained that the whole regular army was coming here, that the affair against Vera Cruz was to be the great effort of the whole war, and that General Taylor was merely to remain quiet and on the defensive—that I was the only officer of his staff detached, though all applied to come here—I felt reconciled, though I must confess I regretted exceedingly parting with the old man.

He has been most outrageously treated by the Administration, which hopes to play off General Scott against him, and by depriving him of all his command, and leaving him in an exposed position, with one-third of the force which he had before, and which he deemed necessary, to break him down and destroy his popularity. I trust that it will signally fail, and from having the plaudits of the people for bravery and skill, he will now have their sympathy for the injustice of the course pursued towards him.

We arrived here last night. I find the place much larger than I expected, and really quite delightful. There is a large foreign population of merchants, and in consequence the town has all such comforts as good restaurants, excellent shops, where everything can be purchased, and is in fact quite as much of a place as New Orleans. It is inaccessible, owing to a bar, having only eight feet of water, and as this is the season of "Northers," already many wrecks have taken place.

General Scott is still at the Brazos de Santiago, having with him, I hear, six officers of my corps, four of whom rank me; so that I shall have to play fifth-fiddle, unless I can manage to keep with General Patterson, which I shall try to do.

I can give you but little Mexican news. There is a report that the Mexican Congress has decided by a vote of three hundred to two

hundred and fifty against the overtures of the United States: but this is a mere report. Santa Anna is elected President; one step towards his doing as he pleases; and sensible people among the Mexicans believe he is desirous of making terms and will bring about a compromise as soon as he can. My opinion is that the war will not last very much longer, for both parties are heartily tired of it, and Mexico is without resources of any kind to carry it on.

Excuse the brevity of my letter, but I am much occupied to-day, as to-morrow I go upon a reconnoissance to select a healthy position for a camp in the neighborhood of this place. I am quite well and strong. The place is perfectly healthy, and I anticipate no serious disease among the troops, here or at Vera Cruz, before June, and long before that time there will either be peace or we shall have Jalapa.

TAMPICO, *February 3, 1847.*

I have been so much occupied in making reconnoissances since I last wrote you, that I have allowed a mail to go off without a letter from me. General Patterson has kept me running around the country, hunting a position to encamp the troops. I have, however, now been in every direction, and presume I shall have a little quiet to myself.

I suppose, of course, that when you heard of my arrival at this place you made up your mind to my being present at the attack on Vera Cruz, but from reports to-day I think it quite problematical.

It appears that General Worth has reached the Brazos, with a force of some three thousand regular troops, and already several of the newly raised volunteer regiments have arrived there. Information, it is said, has been taken to General Scott (also at the Brazos) of the defenseless state of the town, and the small garrison, not over two thousand five hundred, that it and the castle have. Now, it is said, if you strike *immediately*, the place is yours, and in pursuance of this view, as he at present only has transportation for a limited number of troops, he has sent those from the Brazos, which troops, with the navy, will take the place at once. If he waits to concentrate all his forces, he will give them time to send reinforcements, as it is said ten thousand men will be there in two weeks. So much for the report of the day. For my part I do not believe it; I believe General Scott will wait till he can get his whole force together, and that his best policy is to whip a large force there, in preference to an

easy success; that is, as far as peace is concerned. If we defeat fifteen thousand men in the town and castle, break them up, or make them prisoners, we shall be much nearer a peace than if they gave it up to us without a fight.

My only fear is that we shall leave it so late that the scourge of the country, vomito, will make its appearance, in which case we shall have to evacuate the place at once; but if we are quick about the matter, we can take the town and march to Jalapa before the end of April, and I have no fears before the month of May. Indeed, the disease does not take the form of an epidemic before July and August; but considering the exposures of a camp and our northern constitutions, I shall look for it in May, if we are not off the seacoast. I cannot conceive anything to prevent our being out of danger by that time, and I therefore give myself no uneasiness upon this subject, and trust you will follow my example.

General Scott is at the Brazos, and has with him Major Turnbull and four other Topographical Engineers. Captain McClelland arrived here yesterday, and reported to General Patterson, thus putting my nose out of joint. He brought me three pairs of spectacles, sent by you, for which I thank you very much, for I was on my last pair, and have had some terrible frights lately when I thought I had lost them.

We are in a complete state of ignorance here as to what is to be done. Some say that we are going by land, some by water, others that we are to wait here till Worth and Scott take Vera Cruz, and then go there. All are surmises, nothing is known. My own impression is that General Scott is waiting for his transports; that as soon as they arrive we shall all be shipped to some place of rendezvous, such as Anton Lizardo or Sacrificios, and then landed to operate against Vera Cruz; that the whole force will go there, and go by water. A few days will give us more information, as General Scott is expected here daily.

Tampico is a delightful place, having fine *cafes*, and all the luxuries of a somewhat civilized town. A few evenings since a party was given by the lady of one of the foreign consuls. Only about fifteen officers attended. I was not among the number, being an entire stranger to all concerned, but I understand it was quite an elegant affair, and that there were many beautiful Mexican girls among the guests.

I trust that when we take Vera Cruz the foolish Mexicans will

come to terms. Some say negotiations are pending now, and we had a report yesterday that commissioners had gone to Washington; but all these are humbugs, I know. I do not believe they will make peace till we have given them one or two terrible thrashings, and follow up our success by marching directly on their capital. When they see us advancing and breaking down all opposition, they may be induced to come to terms.

TAMPICO, *February 8, 1847.*

I have not much news to give you, though there are many rumors afloat. General Scott is still at the Brazos, with some four thousand men. We have here, under Generals Patterson and Twiggs, some five thousand, and there are several vessels which have passed here, destined for the Island of Lobos (a point on the coast about forty miles south), where the new levies from the States are to rendezvous.

The prevailing impression is that General Scott is only waiting for the ships and steamers from the United States, to transport the whole force by water to Vera Cruz, where a landing will be made, and the town and castle taken.

It is estimated that he will have an efficient force of twelve thousand men (five thousand regulars), with a full supply of heavy artillery—in fact, a completely equipped expedition—and that it will not take us many days to reduce both castle and town. If we are only lucky in securing a good landing for our troops and supplies, I have no fear of the result. Once on *terra firma*, with plenty of ammunition and provisions, I am confident we can overcome any resistance the Mexicans can make, but every day's delay now is most fatal to us, for the healthiness of the place cannot be depended on after March, and should the fever break out before we succeed in taking the place, the expedition will be a complete and utter failure. Then, again, in transporting so many troops upon this dangerous and stormy coast, we must expect embarrassments from the elements, for one "Norther" will scatter the fleet of transports to all parts of the Gulf, and it may take weeks to reassemble. Why did not the Government, on the 13th of October, when it determined to annul General Taylor's armistice, *at once* decide on attacking Vera Cruz, and make its preparations, call out troops, and have us before Vera Cruz in December, with the whole winter and spring before us, and not, as it has done, dilly-dally and waste precious time in inaction, till it has now made success exceedingly questionable, from the danger of the climate,

more to be dreaded than the enemy? It has a heavy responsibility to answer for, but I trust in God we may have good fortune, which will put off the day of reckoning.

We had yesterday an arrival from the Brazos; no transports yet arrived. In the meantime rumor says the Mexicans are reinforcing and strengthening Vera Cruz, and that we shall meet an army of some twenty thousand men there. The latter part of this I hope is true. As I told you before we went to Monterey, the more we meet the better; for if we succeed, not only do we acquire a greater glory, but the enemy are broken up and suffer in proportion. There will be no capitulation at Vera Cruz; a complete victory must be had on one side or the other, and if we gain the day, the Mexican army will be our prisoners, as there is no escape for them; and as I am sure we shall conquer, the more we overcome, the fewer will we have to meet at other points, and the greater the chance of peace. Rumor also says that Santa Anna is advancing on General Taylor at Monterey, in hopes of succeeding against his diminished force (he having only four thousand volunteers), but I believe, if he is making a move, it is in the hopes of drawing us back there, that the precious time between now and the vomito season may be wasted by us in useless march, and thus the expedition to Vera Cruz be put off till the fall. But in this he will be mistaken. General Taylor's force, though small, is large enough, with the natural advantages of Monterey, to keep off the whole army of Mexico, so long as he has supplies, and I trust he is well off in that particular; and we only wait for ships to carry us, when Vera Cruz will be attacked and taken.

One of the ships, having on board two hundred Louisiana volunteers, under Colonel DeRussy, was wrecked a few days ago on its way to Lobos Island, a point about forty miles below here, and the same distance from Tuspan, where there is a Mexican force stationed. General Cos, the officer in command at Tuspan, hearing of the wreck, started off with a thousand men and two pieces of artillery, to capture two hundred poor wrecked fellows, one-half of whom had lost their arms. On approaching the spot, he sent a polite letter to Colonel DeRussy, asking him to surrender, and offering to send him to Vera Cruz or the United States, on his parole. The message was received a little before sunset, and the colonel asked till the next morning at nine to deliberate. As soon as night set in he commenced retreating up the beach, and soon met one hundred regulars, who had been sent to escort a train of mules, with provisions for him, we

knowing here of his being wrecked, but not knowing of his being menaced by the enemy. With this reinforcement he made good his retreat, and at the last accounts had halted to give the Mexicans a fight, should they dare to advance on him. Many of us here think a respectable force should have been immediately sent to cut off Mr. Cos; but General Patterson doubtless thinks he is not authorized to enter into any expedition that would be likely to have out of the way any portion of the command when the transports, hourly expected, should arrive.

We also have information of the reoccupation of Victoria by a large Mexican force, which is employed in maltreating and robbing all those who were civil to us during our stay there. This I consider cruel treatment on the part of our Government, to send troops to occupy a place, hoist our flag, give appearances of protection to all, threatening those who are unwilling to serve you, thus making and forcing them to perform acts for which they are punished by their own armies, on our evacuating the place. Either let the people alone, or when you once have taken a place, hold it and protect those who compromise themselves by serving you. When is the Government of the United States going to awake from its lethargy and send into Mexico a force *sufficient to prosecute the war vigorously*? Does it expect our good fortune, and want of energy on the part of our enemies, hitherto attending our operations, is to last forever? If so, it is woefully mistaken, and it will find it so before long, to its cost. The war will never be ended so long as it is carried on on the small scale we have hitherto done. We must threaten Mexico in such a manner, and with such a force, as will at once prove to her the inutility of resistance, and then we may begin to hope for peace; but as it is now she clings to the expectation, that by opposing to us treble our numbers with defensive works, she will be able to check us, and the first disaster attending us, she expects a *pronunciamento* on the part of the Whigs and Northern Democrats, forcing the Government to withdraw the troops and propose more lenient terms. In this idea she is supported by the fact of the mere handful of men we have in the field, to hold possession of a territory almost as large as our whole country, and at the same time invade the heart of a populous country, defended by the most formidable natural barriers, and with a people who, however low be their spirit, may at least be expected to defend their homes, their families and their religion. She is still more fortified in this idea by the speeches in Congress of some of the Whigs, and the tone

of many newspapers of the Whig press. She believes the war unpopular, and she fancies that by holding on she will tire us out, and *dollars and cents* will conquer us, if not arms.

Do not think this idea absurd; it is true. There have been received here Mexican journals, with large quotations from Mr. Webster's¹ speech at Philadelphia, and from the columns of the "National Intelligencer," proving the unpopularity of the war. They cite the recent elections to prove that Mr. Polk is not sustained, and they say, "Let us hold on and suffer, and in a short time the Government of the United States will be forced to respect Mexico and to withdraw all its exorbitant demands."

Now, while I give you this as the tone of public feeling in Mexico, I neither endorse it nor consider it fair; but at the same time I consider the course of the "Intelligencer," and of Mr. Webster and others, most injudicious and tending more to continue the war than any other cause. To force Mexico to terms is a most difficult affair, and never to be accomplished, unless we display to her and the world our determination to do it at every sacrifice, and that in this determination we are united to a man. Let us show a bold and united front, forget *party* for an instant; now that we are in the war, prosecute it with all possible vigor, not in talk but in acts; treble our ships upon her coasts, and blockade them in reality, and not nominally, as is now done for want of vessels; threaten her from Saltillo and Vera Cruz with armies, each of twenty-five thousand men; let her see we are determined to carry everything before us; and you may rest assured that if she is ever going to make peace, she will do it then, and not till then.

The sentiments of Mr. Crittenden² and those of Joseph R. Ingersoll³ are those that we, the workers and sufferers, applaud. Finish the war, and then give it to the Administration; but do not protract the war by embarrassing it, and leading our enemies to suppose we are distracted in council, and by consequence weak in moral and physical force.

TAMPICO, *February 17, 1847.*

We have nothing particularly new. It is well ascertained that the troops at this place and the Brazos are destined to operate against

¹ Daniel Webster, U. S. senator.

² John J. Crittenden, U. S. senator.

³ Joseph R. Ingersoll, U. S. representative in Congress.

Vera Cruz, and only await transportation to sail for that point. Ships were expected here by the 15th of last month. The delay in their appearance is unaccountable, and a heavy responsibility must rest on the shoulders of some individual or department. We have now been lying inactive at this place for twenty-six days, ample time to have proceeded to Vera Cruz and taken the place; for when we first arrived the garrison was small and ill-provided, and would have yielded with but little resistance. As it is now, no vessels are yet here, the enemy is daily increasing in strength and means of resistance, and the season of the vomito is rapidly approaching. We all trust to see transportation here in ten days, and are most anxious to get down and have the work, which must be done, over.

The most important information we have is intelligence received from the interior, that Santa Anna, finding General Taylor left with so small a force at Saltillo and Monterey (only four thousand five hundred volunteers and five hundred regulars), has advanced on him with fifteen thousand men, from San Luis, and sent the force from Tula, six thousand men, to operate on his rear and cut off his communications with Camargo. This news is in Mexican journals of the 3d instant. They contain also Santa Anna's address to his troops, telling them the time for action has arrived, and they are to march, to drive us from the Rio Grande, or die. His advance of two thousand cavalry has captured a scouting party of General Taylor's, consisting of five officers and sixty-five men, Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, at a place about forty miles from Saltillo.

Great anxiety is felt for our old and much-loved commander, and a feeling of indignation against the Government for stripping him of all his force is prevalent throughout the army. Should anything happen to General Taylor, the country will demand the reason for his being left in the most exposed point, with so insufficient a force.

This state of things I had anticipated as soon as I heard that so large a force was to be concentrated here and General Taylor left with so small a one. I foresaw that the Mexicans would exert all their energy to overwhelm him, as the weakest point; but it now appears that General Scott's despatches to him, containing a full development of all his plans and exact statement of forces, were captured on the person of Lieutenant Richey, of the Fifth Infantry, who was cruelly assassinated in Villa Grande, on his way to deliver them to General Taylor. He had an escort of ten dragoons, but un-

wisely separating himself from them, after getting into the town, was waylaid and murdered. So that Santa Anna knew all of General Scott's intentions, almost as soon as General Taylor, and has made use of his information to endeavor to overcome him.

If General Taylor has ample supply of provisions, he can fall back on Monterey and hold it against the whole of Mexico; but if he has not full supplies, his communications will, without doubt, be cut off, and he may be obliged to yield for want of provisions. But where is his assistance to come from? Is General Scott, upon rumor, going to break up his force, to send back to General Taylor troops just drawn from him? And here is probably the solution of Santa Anna's movements. Knowing the organization of an expedition for Vera Cruz, on the seaboard, he advances upon General Taylor. If General Taylor is reinforced, he hopes it will break up the expedition against Vera Cruz, or delay it till such time as the vomito will appear. If General Taylor is not reinforced, he will throw himself with his whole force on him, and endeavor to drive him back to the Rio Grande. This is masterly tactics, and our blundering has thrown the game into his own hands. All this arises from our not having one-half the number of men in the country that we ought to have. When will the war be conducted on a proper scale? and when will the Government call out troops in time? Here, in two months, nine thousand volunteers will go out of service, and as yet not a step is taken to supply their places, and when we take Vera Cruz, we will have no force to follow up our success, and must wait some six months before another raw army is assembled.

TAMPICO, *February 19, 1847.*

I wrote to you, day before yesterday, a long letter, so that I have but little to tell you now. General Scott has not yet arrived, though he is hourly expected. He has sent orders to detain and charter all the vessels that may arrive here, so that there will be no opportunity of writing after to-morrow, until we land at Vera Cruz.

Great anxiety still prevails on account of General Taylor. Letters from San Luis state that Santa Anna has marched on him with over fifteen thousand men, and General Taylor cannot muster more than five thousand irregulars. A rumor was brought into town yesterday by a Mexican, and is believed by the Mexicans, that the armies had met and General Taylor had routed the enemy. But the report is premature. From the dates on which we know Santa Anna to have

left San Luis, he has not had time to reach Saltillo, much less fight a battle and have the news brought here. Still, it shows the expectation of the Mexicans, and that they are prepared to hear of the defeat of fifteen thousand of their best troops by four thousand of our volunteers. God grant it may be true, and that the old hero has again come off victorious!

We, at this place, are *in statu quo*. Several large ships have arrived for the transportation of troops, and the presumption is that we shall be off in the course of ten days or two weeks for Vera Cruz, unless General Taylor should require of General Scott reinforcements, in which case there is no telling what will be done. We certainly have laid ourselves open to attack; our force is too small to operate on one line, and yet we are attempting to hold one and operate on another. General Scott may leave General Taylor to his fate, in which case about the time we are taking Vera Cruz we may hear of the defeat of Taylor, and the evacuation of the country by our troops to the Rio Grande. This will be a pretty state of affairs.

TAMPICO, February 24, 1847.

General Scott touched here a few days ago and spent twenty-four hours. He seemed to be quite insensible to everything but his own expedition, and although the strongest representations were made to him of the critical condition in which we believe General Taylor to be, he only answered, "*Men of straw, men of straw*," and took no further notice. God grant these men of straw may not throw upon his shoulders a responsibility too great for him to bear!

They say that the castle is the apple of the eye of the Mexican nation; that they know, if we take it, we will blow it up, and it will be impossible ever to rebuild it, it having cost over fifty millions of dollars, and that they will make any sacrifice to save it. This looks plausible, and I trust it may be true, for if Vera Cruz is evacuated, we can march at once into the interior, and thus avoid the vomito, more to be dreaded than a dozen Mexican armies.

General Scott has gone to the Island of Lobos, about forty miles south of here, where there is comparatively secure anchorage, and where the whole fleet of transports is to rendezvous. Nearly all the troops at Brazos had embarked when he left, and the embarkation is beginning here.

I shall go with General Patterson, in the course of a few days, as soon as half of his command gets off. I continue well and in good

spirits. I have enjoyed myself very much in Tampico, which is really an agreeable place, after the towns I have recently been in. The officers, about a week since, got up a picnic excursion on board a steamboat, which they induced some thirty ladies to attend. They were mostly the wives and daughters of the foreign consuls, though we had some dozen Mexican ladies. We had one of the military bands, and went some twenty miles up the river, dancing on the deck of the steamer. We started at four in the afternoon, had a little supper about nine, and returned to town by twelve. Altogether, it was a very pleasant affair.

February 26.

It blew a "Norther" all day yesterday, and it continues to blow so that no vessel can leave the harbor. Last night we had a little hop in town, gotten up by some of the young foreign residents. It was much the same thing as one sees everywhere—a well-lighted room, good music, and some twenty-five or thirty well-dressed ladies, who danced and waltzed as ladies do all over the world. The novelty of the thing was agreeable to me, and with those ladies who could talk French or English I passed my time very pleasantly, but to the Mexican girls, you may well imagine, I had but little to say. There was no beauty, and the prettiest girl would not have been noticed in one of our ball rooms. The people are very kindly disposed towards us, and were they not afraid of the return of the Mexicans, and being compromised by civility to us, they would be very hospitable. Even as it is, their love of amusement overcomes their fears, and we had more Mexican girls last night than we had at the picnic. We were all in good spirits, because information was received in the afternoon that an agent from the Government of the United States, bearing new propositions, had been landed by the "Potomac" at Vera Cruz, and had reached the City of Mexico, and that so important were his despatches deemed, an express had been sent to Santa Anna for his advice. This agent is said to be Senor Atocha, a Mexican who was expelled from his country some years ago, but is said to be in the confidence of Santa Anna. Rumor says his proposition is to take the twenty-sixth degree of latitude for our Southern boundary, and dropping all claims against Mexico, we pay them fifteen millions of dollars. This is giving us a monstrously big slice of the Republic, but they are in such a desperate condition, I should not be astonished if the fifteen millions bought them over. At any rate, we hope so, and peace is much talked of.

No intelligence from Santa Anna's army, though, at the last accounts, he was within a day's march of General Taylor, and a battle was looked for hourly. God grant the old General may whip him!

February 27.

The weather continues unfavorable for the departure of the vessel that is to carry the mail. This is bad luck for us, as it stops the shipping of the troops, and every day is of the utmost importance. No news from General Taylor, though the Mexicans have a rumor that Santa Anna's cavalry made a night attack on him, and were most signally repulsed. We are in the greatest state of anxiety to hear the result, as we are now certain that Santa Anna has thrown himself with his whole force upon him.

February 28.

I expect I shall leave before my letter, for it is arranged that we go to-morrow, early in the morning, in the steamship "Alabama," one of the best steamers in the service, and the mail will not probably leave till the day after. You may therefore get later intelligence than I can give you. Our anxiety about General Taylor still continues, as we hear nothing beyond the report I gave you yesterday, that he had repulsed a night attack of cavalry. As to Vera Cruz, we are in a perfect state of ignorance. One day we hear that it is abandoned, the next that it has a garrison of fifteen thousand men; so that you really know not what to believe. My impression is that we shall meet with resistance, which we will successfully overcome; and such being the case, as I told you before we reached Monterey, the more they have there the better. We are going perfectly prepared, having, I understand, forty pieces of heavy artillery, besides forty large mortars; and the place is to be taken scientifically—that is, with the least possible loss of life. I feel perfectly confident of success; we can take the town without much trouble, and the castle we will starve out.

If General Taylor whips Santa Anna, as I hope he will, and believe he will till I hear the reverse, and we take Vera Cruz, I think there will be some hope of peace.

We leave to-morrow for Lobos. It will be some time before all the troops rendezvous there, and then we have to go to Anton Lizardo, about eighteen miles below Vera Cruz, where it is proposed to

land; so that it will be some weeks before we can invest the place. I tell you this, that you may not be anxious at not hearing of any result.

STEAM TRANSPORT "ALABAMA,"

HARBOR OF ANTON LIZARDO, *March 8, 1847.*

I wrote you from Tampico, just previous to our embarkation for this place. We dropped down to the bar of Tampico on the 1st instant, but did not get over it till the evening of the 2d. We had a pleasant voyage, except on the 4th, when we had a violent "Norther," lasting the whole day; but our ship behaved most beautifully, and we reached this anchorage on the morning of the 5th. During that day the whole fleet from Lobos came in, and by evening we had some seventy sail of all kinds. On the 6th, General Scott, with all the general officers of the army, accompanied by the Engineer and Topographical Engineer staff, went with Commodore Connor on board one of the small naval steamers, to make a reconnoissance of the coast, with a view to selecting a suitable point for landing. We coasted along quietly till we came to Sacrificios, when we went in to take a view of the town and castle. In doing this we went within one and a quarter miles of the castle, when it opened its batteries on us and fired some eleven shells; luckily quite ineffectually, they either falling short or going over our heads. This operation I considered very foolish; for, having on board all the general officers of the army, one shot, hitting the vessel and disabling it, would have left us a floating target to the enemy, and might have been the means of breaking up the expedition. It, however, proved the determination of the enemy to resist, and all are now of the opinion that hard fighting alone will give us the place. Yesterday, the 7th, preparations were being made, and orders issued, with reference to landing, and it was intended to make the descent to-day at Sacrificios; but the usual indications of a "Norther" being so strong, the debarkation was postponed for the present.

It is intended to disembark at Sacrificios, out of range of the enemy's guns, and then establish a camp around the town, so as to cut off all communication with the interior. The enemy's works will then be examined, and suitable points selected for trenching the walls. Regular approaches will then be made to within three hundred yards, where our trenching batteries will be established and the walls knocked down. The town will then be accessible, and once within its walls, in possession of a single house, and they are ours.

We have not the slightest doubt of our sure and ultimate success, and it is supposed that it will not occupy more than four or five days to take the town; the castle will be a work of time, and in my opinion it will only be reduced by starvation. The length of time it will require to do this depends upon the amount of supplies they may have on hand.

So much for our operations. Now for Mexican reports. Through the medium of the officers of the English men-of-war stationed at Sacrificios, who have constant intercourse with the town, we are supplied with the daily files of the "Locomotor," a paper published in Vera Cruz. The number the day we reached here was full of patriotic bombast as to the defense they were going to make, and gave an account of a young women's procession, in which all the young and beautiful creatures of the place had turned out with shovels to work on the fortifications. The Englishmen say they had but about six thousand men in town and castle, though La Vega, with two thousand men, was near, and daily expected. With this small force they cannot make very great resistance, for we shall have, when all are landed, between thirteen and fourteen thousand, and have forty heavy guns, and as many mortars, with which we shall soon make the place a little too hot for them.

But the most interesting information in the newspaper is the official report to the Supreme Government of Santa Anna, announcing a two-days' fight with General Taylor, near Saltillo. He says he found General Taylor strongly posted at a pass in front of Saltillo; that he attacked him on the 22d of February; that they fought all that day and the next, on the evening of which (the 23d) he was writing; that the field remained to his army, and he was only prevented from *routing* General Taylor by the great strength of his position; that he captured three pieces of artillery and two standards; that he, himself, has lost one thousand in killed and wounded, General Taylor having lost *two thousand*; and after recounting all these successes and General Taylor's great loss, he says that the necessity of giving proper attention to his wounded will compel him *to retire upon Agua Nueva, nine miles distant*, and if he there finds the supplies he has ordered up, he will renew the attack. This is about the sum and substance of his report, with the addition of much bombast about the heroism and courage of his soldiers, and the great sacrifices they have undergone, and the impossibility of expecting such conduct unless they are properly fed and paid.

The conclusion from his report, making due allowance for the usual amount of falsehood in such documents, is that he attempted for two days to overwhelm General Taylor, but has been foiled, and so badly handled as to be compelled to give up the *effort* and *retire*.

If you have received my previous letters from Tampico, you will find I have been aware for some time of his critical condition (General Taylor's) and have had the greatest anxiety. I am now sure that when his account is received, it will be found he has sustained himself nobly, and has made a proper commentary on the shameful conduct of the House of Representatives on the vote of thanks.

If General Taylor had lost two thousand men (nearly one-half his force) and three pieces of artillery, and *the enemy is in possession of the field* (which was his great defense, his position), how is it possible that Santa Anna, losing only one-fifteenth of his force, did not rout him, or at least oblige him to retreat?—whereas he acknowledges that the action is *undecided*, and that he is compelled to delay its final decision till he can get supplies for his wounded. But if in possession of the field, with an enemy who had lost one-half his force, retiring from him, why not wait those supplies *on the field*, and not carry his wounded nine miles? But the inference is evident: he is not in possession of the field; he could not dislodge General Taylor, and owing to his failure is compelled to retire nine miles, knowing General Taylor's force is too small to follow him that distance. We therefore consider it a victory, and the pieces of artillery, we presume, is some advanced battery of General Taylor's, which he was compelled, from superior numbers, to abandon. Santa Anna says that it was composed of one four-pounder and two six-pounders. Now, General Taylor had a Texas four-pounder, manned by Illinois volunteers, and it is possible that this battery, being in front or in some exposed position, may have fallen into the enemy's hand. But General Taylor has maintained his position and compelled Santa Anna to retire, and this was more than was expected of him, for we all thought that he would have to retire to the fortifications of Monterey, whereas the old hero went out in front of Saltillo, and with only five thousand men (four thousand five hundred of them volunteers) has beaten back Santa Anna, with the whole of the Mexican army, over fifteen thousand men strong, with an overwhelming preponderance of heavy artillery.

We can detect several falsehoods in his report, such as General Taylor's having eight thousand men, when we know that he had but

five thousand; also that General Taylor had twenty-six pieces of artillery, when we know that he had but eighteen; and we attach no consideration to his estimate of General Taylor's loss, as he can have no means of correctly estimating it.

It has had the effect to put us all in good spirits; apprehension for General Taylor's safety is now removed, and, when we take this place, I think the Mexicans will begin to think matters are becoming serious.

The same paper also gives an account of a revolution in the capital, gotten up by the clergy, in consequence of the attempt to force a loan out of them. The account says that they fought for three days, and Gomez Farias is overthrown, in consequence of his being the prominent supporter of the obnoxious measure. Still, the editor of the paper says both parties, however they may differ upon other points, are agreed upon the vigorous prosecution of the war, and are only quarrelling about the manner in which the means shall be raised. We also understand that three thousand men, under orders for Vera Cruz, refused to march, averring that they were not afraid of the Yankees, but would not expose themselves to the vomito.

What is going to come out of all this no one can tell. The agent of whom I have previously written, Senor Atocha, returned some ten days ago. He was much dispirited, and pretty much gave the naval officers to understand that his mission had failed, and if we understand it correctly, I am not surprised. Just take a map and see what an immense portion of Mexico is included north of the twenty-sixth parallel of latitude,¹ and say whether, if you were a Mexican, you would consent to despoil your country of so large a portion of its domain? Until the Government of the United States is reasonable in its demands, it need not look for peace. Mexico must be much more roughly handled than she has been, or is likely to be, before she will accede to such exorbitant demands. But enough of public matters.

I have given you all the news, and told you of all our preparations. In a few days we shall be engaged in bombarding and battering the town, and with the blessing of God I will give you a long account of it.

I saw on board the "Raritan," flag-ship, Lieutenant Biddle, who told me that he had seen you late in January, a month after your

¹ The twenty-sixth parallel of latitude passes through the Brazos de Santiago.

last letter, and that you were well. He had been at a party at your mother's, he said. And from Tom Turner, on board the "Albany," I had information that my dear mother, who had been seriously ill, was out of all danger and getting well. So that I feel confident that all whom I love are safe and in good health. I have also met here Henry Bohlen, who is volunteer aide to General Worth, and his letters say all their friends are well. Bohlen is looking very well, and quite delighted at the prospect of active operations.

My own opinion is that they will make no resistance to our landing, though every preparation to meet such an emergency has been made. General Worth's brigade lands first, then General Patterson, with whom I will land, and then General Twiggs's brigade. We will be landed by the navy boats, and our own boats manned and officered by the navy. The vessels of war will be there to clear the landing, if necessary. As soon as we have landed we will take a position around the town, or in military parlance, invest it. Many suppose even now that they will give up the town as soon as they see our force and the means of attack, but I think they will fight. A few days now will tell the story. I am confident of the result, and feel quite sanguine.

CAMP BEFORE VERA CRUZ, *March 13, 1847.*

I write you a few lines in haste, to assure you of my health and safety. We landed on the 9th instant, without opposition; but on the 10th, on commencing our march to invest the town, we were met by a small party of infantry and cavalry, which we quickly and readily drove from hill to hill till we had surrounded the town. In this operation we had a few wounded, but the enemy suffered quite severely, having many killed and wounded. Besides this, in taking up our positions we were directed to place ourselves beyond the range of their guns, but they had placed some in such a position that part of our command were, from the nature of the ground, compelled to place themselves under their long range. In consequence of this we have had a few men wounded and Captain Alburtiss, of the Second Infantry, killed. This is our only loss, and he is, I believe, the only officer touched, except Lieutenant Colonel Dickinson, South Carolina Regiment, who received a slight wound in the breast, and Lieutenant Davidson, Second Infantry, wounded in the hand.

We have now invested the town and cut off all communication with the interior. Our batteries will soon be placed, and then the

game, which has been altogether on the enemy's side, will begin on ours. The enemy are about five thousand strong in town and castle, strongly fortified with artillery, but our engineers are confident that they will bring them to terms.

We have information through the Vera Cruz papers, that Santa Anna has retreated from Agua Nueva, on the City of Mexico. The inference therefore is that he has been completely whipped.

CAMP BEFORE VERA CRUZ, *March 25, 1847.*

You will have heard that Commodore Connor has been relieved by Captain Perry. He returns in the "Princeton."

I have but little intelligence to give you, beyond the fact of my safety and good health up to this moment. It has now been two days since a battery of ten mortars was opened on the town, which has been constantly throwing shells into it. It is presumed that the damage done has been very great, and several houses have been burnt; but I fear all the injury has fallen on innocent people, non-combatants, such as citizens, women and children, and that the soldiery have not been touched. Yesterday a battery of six guns, the pieces of which came from the navy, and which was officered and manned by the navy, opened on the town, and has been playing for twenty-four hours. This morning a battery of four twenty-four-pounders and two eight-inch howitzers was also opened, and hopes are entertained that these batteries will bring the town to terms. My opinion, however, is that they are doing but little damage to the enemy's works and troops, and that the town will only be carried at the point of the bayonet.

Our loss has been trifling, considering the great exposure of our people. Up to this moment, besides the losses mentioned in my last letter, only one officer has been killed, Captain J. R. Vinton, of the artillery, who was killed in the trenches. Lieutenant Baldwin, of the navy, was slightly hurt yesterday at the naval battery. Besides these, some eight or ten men have been killed, and as many wounded; a loss most small, when you consider that we have some thirteen thousand men, and that a large proportion have been exposed to the heavy firing of six of the enemy's batteries for nearly a week. But we have been enabled by the advantages of the ground, and throwing up works, to protect ourselves.

For my individual part I have been pretty much a spectator for a week, the Corps of Engineers having performed all the engineering

that has been done. This is attributable to the presence of Colonel Totten, who wishes to make as much capital for his own corps, and give us as little, as possible. My great regret now is that I was separated from General Taylor. His brilliant achievement at Buena Vista, exceeding any feat ever yet performed by our arms, or which ever will be, I should have gloried to have shared in, and regret exceedingly fate should have decided otherwise.

Harry Ingersoll commanded yesterday the gun from his ship in the naval battery. He had several men killed at his gun, and had his hat knocked off, besides other escapes; but I saw him after he was relieved, and he was safe and sound. This opportunity has been afforded the navy, owing to its great anxiety to do something, and there being no opportunity on its own element.

March 27, 1847.

A violent "Norther" prevented the "Princeton" from sailing yesterday, and it has turned out very well, for yesterday a flag came in from the enemy, asking for terms. General Scott's reply was prompt and conclusive: Nothing but an unconditional surrender of town and castle.

They made some demurring, but commissioners have been appointed on both sides, and are at this moment (10 A. M.) endeavoring to arrange terms satisfactory to the Mexicans. It is evident from this fact that the game is up for the Mexicans; the town is ours beyond a doubt, for they would not ask for terms if they were not willing to give it up.

The "Princeton" will wait for the result, and you will hear it by her. Should they not come to General Scott's terms, one day more will give us the town by force of arms, and then we will go to work on the castle.

I cannot write more. I am well and trust in God's mercy all will come out right.

I regret to say that young Schubrick, of the navy, was killed, day before yesterday, at the naval battery. His mother was a du Pont.

NEW ORLEANS, April 9, 1847.

I have reached thus far on my way home, having been, as you will see by the enclosed document, ordered to Washington by General Scott, or in other words "*honorably discharged.*" When I last

wrote to you (March 27th), I had but little conception that any such great happiness was in store for me; but our good friend General Worth (who has done everything in his power to convince me he had no agency in the omission in his report of the paragraph relating to me) represented, without my knowledge, to General Scott the length of time I had been in the field, and the faithful services I had rendered. General Scott, being aware that I did not legitimately belong to the column under his command, at once said: "If Major Turnbull, Chief Topographical Engineer, will say Mr. Meade's services are not absolutely necessary, I will order him to Washington." Major Turnbull said that I was unexpectedly with him, that I did not belong to his detail, and consequently he had officers enough without me. The order was therefore issued, of which I send you a copy, and I took passage on the 31st ultimo, on board the steamer "Alabama," expecting to be here some six days ago. But she was obliged to stop at Tampico, where we remained two days, and also at the Brazos, where we lost a day; and then one of the boilers gave out, just as we crossed the bar of the Mississippi, and detained us twenty-four hours in getting up the river. All these things caused us to fail in reaching here before last evening.

I also enclose you a letter addressed to the Adjutant General at Washington, by which you will perceive that the error with reference to myself in General Worth's report is disclaimed as intentional.

What will you say to my return? and what will your dear father say? I will frankly acknowledge that I had a most anxious time in making up my mind what to do. I, however, reasoned that it was my intention, from the first moment I left you, to perform my duty and remain so long as duty required me, but to retire whenever I could do so honorably, and I could not retire in a more honorable manner than I have done.

Again, I found myself at Vera Cruz a perfect cipher, the major, three captains and one lieutenant I had over my head depriving me of any opportunity I might otherwise have of distinction.

Thirdly. Though I have said and written nothing about it, because I could not help it, yet the expenditure of my whole pay while in the field, and leaving you without any share, has been a source of mortification to me greater than I can describe.

Finally, I consulted my friends, some of the most distinguished officers of the army, such as Lieutenant Colonel C. F. Smith and

Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, General Worth and others, and all of them advised me to leave.

The above were the reasons influencing me; but I had, nevertheless, to struggle against my own personal inclination, which, I frankly confess, was to remain, and against the fear that, when I report to Colonel Abert, he may either send me right back to General Taylor, or else send me to some out-of-the-way place, where my separation will be almost as complete from you, without all the advantages of being with an army in the field. However, I will hope for the best, and not anticipate evils; but I sincerely trust that both yourself and father will not disapprove of the step I have taken. I do not now speak of the happiness we both shall feel at being reunited, but I speak of it as a question of duty and honor, and with reference to future interests.

However, for better or worse, here I am on my way back to you. I shall be detained here two days, for I have a public account to close in bank, and I am literally without even the necessary garments to travel in. I may be detained a day in Charleston, and shall certainly be one in Washington. You need hardly expect me, then, before the 22d or 23d, though, rest assured, I shall leave no exertion unspared to hasten the moment when I shall hold you and my ever dear children in my arms.

I forgot to say that I had seen in the papers my brevet for Monterey, and just on leaving Vera Cruz got your letter, referring to the same. Of course, I feel complimented and gratified at any notice being taken of my services, and am truly grateful to your good father for the exertion of his good offices on my behalf. I will soon see him, however, and return my thanks in person.

ON BOARD THE MAIL STEAMER,
IN THE RIVER POTOMAC, *April 20, 1847.*

We are within a few miles of Washington, and I write these few lines to inform you of my safe arrival thus far. Owing to our taking a boat on the Alabama River, instead of the mail coach from Mobile, we lost a day, and I remained a day in Charleston, to transact some business with individuals residing there. This has put me back two days, so that I shall not see you, as I hoped, on the 20th. To-morrow I must remain in Washington, to report to Colonel Abert and settle some accounts at the Department. If all things go right, I hope to leave the next day for Philadelphia, in which case you may look

for me to dinner. I may come on in the night train, but I am so fatigued with traveling at night that I now propose to come in the day line.¹

¹ On the night of March 27 articles of capitulation were signed and exchanged, and General Scott on the 29th took possession of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa. On April the 8th General Scott began his advance on the city of Mexico, and after defeating the Mexicans at Cerro Gordo, Jalapa, Puebla, Contreras, Churubusco, and Chapultepec he attacked the capital and entered it September 14, 1847. The army occupied the city of Mexico until the treaty of peace was signed, February, 1848.

The following served with the army in Mexico under Generals Taylor and Scott and afterward became conspicuous in the Civil War and are subsequently mentioned.

UNITED STATES ARMY

George A. McCall, assistant adjutant-general, afterward commanded the Pennsylvania Reserves in the Federal Army of the Potomac.

Joseph Hooker, assistant adjutant-general, afterward commanded the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Chancellorsville, May, 1863.

Irvin W. McDowell, assistant adjutant-general, afterward commanded the Federal forces at the first battle of Bull Run, July, 1861.

Robert E. Lee, captain Engineer Corps, afterward commander-in-chief Confederate States Army, and commanded the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Gettysburg, July, 1863.

P. G. T. Beauregard, first lieutenant Engineer Corps, afterward commanded the Confederate forces at the battle of Shiloh, April, 1862.

George B. McClellan, second lieutenant Engineer Corps, afterward organizer and commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Joseph E. Johnston, captain Topographical Engineer, afterward commanded the Confederate forces at the first battle of Bull Run, July, 1861; also commanded the Confederate forces opposing General Sherman's March to Atlanta, 1865.

George G. Meade, second lieutenant Topographical Engineers, afterward commanded the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Gettysburg, July, 1863.

John Pope, second lieutenant Topographical Engineers, afterward commanded the Federal forces at the battle of Cedar Mountain, August, 1862.

Richard S. Ewell, first lieutenant First Regiment of Dragoons, afterward commanded the Third Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, at the battle of Gettysburg.

George Stoneman, second lieutenant First Regiment of Dragoons, afterward commanded the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac in the campaign known as "Stoneman's cavalry raid," May, 1863.

Alfred Pleasanton, second lieutenant Second Regiment of Dragoons, afterward chief of cavalry Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg.

Abner Doubleday, first lieutenant First Regiment of Artillery, afterward, on the death of General Reynolds, commanded the First Corps, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg.

William H. French, first lieutenant First Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Federal forces at Harper's Ferry during the Gettysburg campaign.

Seth Williams, first lieutenant First Regiment of Artillery, afterward assistant adjutant-general of the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Gettysburg.

Ambrose P. Hill, second lieutenant First Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded Third Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, at the battle of Gettysburg, and killed at the battle of Petersburg, April, 1865.

Henry J. Hunt, first lieutenant Second Regiment Artillery, afterward chief of artillery Army of the Potomac at the battle of Gettysburg.

John Sedgwick, first lieutenant Second Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Sixth Corps, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg, and killed at the battle of Spottsylvania C. H., May, 1864.

Richard H. Rush, second lieutenant Second Regiment of Artillery, afterward colonel Sixth Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry (Rush's Lancers), Army of the Potomac.

Braxton Bragg, captain Third Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded Confederate forces in the Civil War.

Edward O. C. Ord, first lieutenant Third Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Federal forces at the battle of Dranesville, December, 1861.

John F. Reynolds, first lieutenant Third Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the left wing of the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Gettysburg, and killed July 1, 1863.

George H. Thomas, first lieutenant Third Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Federal Army of the Cumberland.

Ambrose E. Burnside, second lieutenant Third Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Fredericksburg, December, 1862.

John Gibbon, second lieutenant Fourth Regiment of Artillery, afterward commanded the Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg.

George Sykes, first lieutenant Third Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded the Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg.

Ulysses S. Grant, second lieutenant Fourth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commander-in-chief United States Army and President of the United States.

Lewis A. Armistead, first lieutenant Sixth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded a brigade in "Pickett's charge" at the battle of Gettysburg and was wounded and died within the Union lines.

Edward Johnson, first lieutenant Sixth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded a division in the Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Gettysburg.

Winfield S. Hancock, second lieutenant Sixth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded the centre of the Army of the Potomac at the battle of Gettysburg.

Lafayette McLaws, first lieutenant Seventh Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded a division in the Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Gettysburg.

James Longstreet, first lieutenant Eighth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded the First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, at the battle of Gettysburg.

George E. Pickett, second lieutenant Eighth Regiment of Infantry, afterward commanded a division in the Army of Northern Virginia and led the assault known as "Pickett's charge" at the battle of Gettysburg.

UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS

Jefferson Davis, colonel First Regiment Mississippi Rifles, afterward President of Confederacy.

John W. Geary, colonel Second Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, afterward commanded a division of the Twelfth Corps, Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Gettysburg.

Jubal A. Early, major Virginia Volunteers, afterward commanded a division in the Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Gettysburg.

PART III

NARRATIVE FROM THE END OF THE MEXICAN WAR LETTERS TO THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS

1847-1861

THE part taken by Lieutenant Meade in the Mexican War is incidentally well indicated by the preceding letters. That his services were appreciated by his immediate superiors is amply proved by frequent mention of him in their official reports. As to the general impression which his character and ability produced, a man of sound judgment wrote from Washington: "I have had great pleasure in learning here accounts of Mr. Meade, the same as you mention; that is to say, that he is in high estimation in the army, and known to everybody. Lieutenant Luther spoke of him to Mrs. Wise, she tells me, as a most efficient officer, much consulted, employed and relied upon. Major —— appeared to me very shy of giving him credit on fit occasions. For instance, I heard him speak of General Worth's operations at Monterey. He said General Worth had a plan or map before him, of positions, routes, etc., but did not say a word of Mr. Meade, who probably furnished the map, and at all events, the materials for it. This morning, however, he showed incidentally in a general talk we had about military matters and the Topographical Corps, that he knew well Mr. Meade's merits and his distinguished position. He quoted what General Worth had said about Mr. Meade's value, and his courage and bravery, and also said (whether from General Worth or himself or both, I do not know) he was such a gentleman. He told me, too (but this must be kept to yourselves), that he had seen a letter of General Worth to the government, speaking in very high terms of Mr. Meade, but did not find the passage in the public despatch. He has promised to show me all the plans, maps, etc. I have been more or less addicted for some years past to a sort of military reading, I did not know why; but now find it of some use, if cautious not to make any pretensions to military knowledge. There is one fact with regard to Mr. Meade, not now

so fruitful as it will some time be, worthy of Margaret's¹ recollection, for it will in due time be productive of results, and I wish her to remember it. By universal concession the corps (Topographical) has gained greatly in public favor during the war as an arm of importance. General Taylor, it is understood, has become convinced of it, though at first he held it in little estimation. You observe, too, that recently more of the corps (five) have been sent to the army, and it is now proposed to increase its force. The fact, then, I refer to is this, that the revolution has taken place when Mr. Meade has been nearly the whole of the time the only officer of the corps with the army, to demonstrate its efficiency and thus work the change in the public mind. He has certainly been the chief if not the only agent in bringing about the change. I am more than satisfied, indeed gratified beyond my expectations, by the character he has acquired. For who could have supposed that with his low grade, and singly, by his own exertions, in a comparatively obscure branch of the service, he could in so short a time have done so much for himself and his corps, not by any chance exhibition, but by the steady employment of his talents and accomplishments in the way of his duty!"

Lieutenant Meade duly arrived in Washington, and upon reporting to the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, found that his anticipations of being reordered to Mexico, or being doomed to some out-of-the-way post, were not realized. His reception was of the most flattering character, and much to his gratification he was directed to proceed to Philadelphia and resume his duties under Major Bache.

The cordial welcome extended to Lieutenant Meade by his numerous friends, and the honors paid him by his fellow-citizens of Philadelphia, greatly enhanced the pleasure he derived from his long-wished-for return to his home and family. Among many other marks of recognition of his services, he was presented by some of his fellow-citizens with a beautiful and costly sword, as a tribute to his gallant conduct in the several actions in Mexico.

He was soon at work assisting Major Bache in the construction of the Brandywine light-house in Delaware Bay, and in making a survey on the Florida Reef, and remained thus employed until September, 1849, when, the services of a topographical engineer being required in Florida, he was selected for the duty and ordered to report to Brevet Major-General Twiggs, at Tampa.

The remnant of the tribe of Seminole Indians, which still occu-

¹ Wife of Lieutenant Meade.

pied parts of Florida, had, after faithfully keeping for seven years the treaty made with them in 1842, by General Worth, become dissatisfied, and in the summer of 1849, had shown indications of an approaching outbreak. Several murders had been committed by them, and the citizens living in that district had become alarmed and compelled to fly from their homes, and for a while it looked as if another Florida war were imminent.

General Twiggs had been ordered to assume command at Tampa, with instructions to adopt such measures as might be needful to secure the frontier or to punish the Indians. It was to assist in this duty that Lieutenant Meade had been ordered to join the command. Judging from previous experience with General Twiggs, he did not anticipate a pleasant tour of duty. He had served with that officer in the advance of General Taylor's army from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande, in 1846, and owing to some unpleasant passages occurring at that time no good feeling existed between them.

He reported to the general in October, at Fort Brooke, and his reception is described as of the most formal character. The general, after giving him instructions, inquired of him what outfit he needed, and was much surprised at his modest demand for "two men and a mule."

His orders were to make a reconnoissance of the country so as to put the general in possession of sufficient topographical knowledge to enable him, if it became necessary, to move his troops with facility. He was also instructed to select the sites for a line of forts on the best route between Fort Brooke at Tampa, and Fort Peirce at Indian River, on the east coast of Florida.

He set to work, as he always did, to execute what he had to do in the most expeditious and thorough manner. The promptness with which he furnished the required information, the excellence of his work, and the completeness of his reports, soon attracted the attention of General Twiggs, who remarked to his adjutant-general: "Meade is doing good work and putting on no staff airs. Order the quartermaster to send him a proper outfit and make him comfortable." This being done, Lieutenant Meade for some time supposed that he was indebted for it to the kindness of his personal friend, the adjutant-general, Brevet Major William W. Mackall, and was much surprised to learn from that officer that it had been done at the instance of the general himself.

There had been some preliminary surveys made, previous to

Lieutenant Meade's arrival, for the site of the first post on the line described between the western and eastern coasts of Florida. One of the results of his survey was, however, the indication of another point, on Peas Creek, as the true position for the post. Thereupon a lively discussion having arisen on the question, General Twiggs finally made a personal examination of the ground, which led to his confirming Lieutenant Meade's selection, and as a recognition of his judgment in the special case, and of his general good service and conduct, he caused the post to be named Fort Meade.

The Indian troubles were settled without any military movements, and the duty for which Lieutenant Meade had been ordered to Florida having been accomplished, he was, in February, 1850, relieved by General Twiggs in a very complimentary order and instructed to report to the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, and by it remanded to his old station in Philadelphia.

He here continued with Major Bache until the completion of the Brandywine light-house in the summer of 1851. Then, under instructions from the bureau, he assumed charge of the building of the light-house on Carysfort Reef, Florida, a very important and difficult work, which had been in charge of Major Linnard, of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, during the winter until his sudden death in the spring of 1851, whereupon the duty of continuing its construction was assigned to Lieutenant Meade.

The continuation of the construction of the Carysfort Reef light-house, Florida, was the first work of the kind in which Lieutenant Meade was in charge, although he had had some experience of that sort of construction while serving in a subordinate capacity. This was the beginning of an employment in that branch of the service for several years.

At that date, 1851, the construction of light-houses, as to variety of structure to support the light, adaptation to ground, and lighting apparatus itself, was in its infancy. Knowledge of these matters, be it understood, was not exactly in its infancy, nor was there wanting, as had been even then proved, plenty of ability in adopting the best appliances known, and in adapting them to, or modifying them for, any possible existing conditions. But within only a recent period, when it was felt that the time had arrived for a national system of lighting the coasts, the building and lighting of houses had been executed in an obsolete and a desultory fashion. In the matter of lighting apparatus alone, many light-houses still had the old-

fashioned reflecting apparatus, modern only as compared with the immemorial ancient beacon fire. It was no longer ago than 1827 that Fresnel had died, after having, through his discoveries, within a few years of his death, revolutionized the whole system of lighting. His improvements, added to by those of the Stevensons and others, had by 1850 rendered the system of lighting apparatus perfect. We had acquired power over the whole range of artificial light, could reflect and refract it, combine the reflecting and refracting systems, and even treat it so that there should be no waste. The screw-pile and the hydraulic-pile had also been invented and applied to the construction of the foundation of towers, and great works in masonry had been executed for light-houses on the coast of England, so that splendid examples had been afforded of the possibilities of light-house construction in various localities. But the Light-House Board of the United States was not organized until August, 1852, so at the period when Lieutenant Meade took charge of the construction of the Carysfort Reef light-house he entered upon the work under the direction of the chief of his corps, Colonel Abert, to help acquire, not to benefit by, the experience which now, by this date, has, under the auspices of the Light-House Board, perfected the light-house system of the United States. He came admirably equipped for the work, through his general training, through special training in such work in the office of Major Bache, through the special aptitude which he had for it, and through the zeal with which he always threw himself into anything that came within the line of his duty.

Although late in the season of 1851 for operations in a semi-tropical climate, Lieutenant Meade at once proceeded to Florida and took charge of the construction of Carysfort Reef light. Henceforth, for several years, his duties in light-house construction necessitated his travelling constantly from point to point on the coast and brief sojourns there. Although himself precluded from enjoying the comforts and solace of a settled home, he determined, in the interest of his young children, that home, with all that it ought to imply of education, good habits, and formation of friendships in early life, should not be wanting to his family. Accordingly he decided that the family should continue to live in Philadelphia, which offered advantages so signal for education and comfort, and where, besides, they were surrounded by relatives and friends, the already wide family circle having been even lately increased by the presence of his aged mother, who had removed from Washington to take up

her permanent residence in Philadelphia. Thus he had been favorably placed, occupying the same house which he had taken soon after being ordered to duty with Major Bache in 1843, and for the last three years enjoying the society of his mother, who lived in her own house only a short distance from his. The unmarred serenity of this life was destined to be rudely broken about this period by death in the family. In 1852 he and his wife experienced a great shock in the death of his mother and of her father. His affection for his mother had been very deep. A mere boy at the time of his father's death, doubtless it had been intensified by increased maternal tenderness at that period. But whatever the cause, the tie was an unusually close one, maintained on both sides with the most touching constancy. She died on the 22d of March, 1852. The death of Mr. Sergeant, closely following on the 25th of November of the same year, was also a severe blow to his daughter, and as well to his son-in-law, whom he had made doubly his son by reposing in him a confidence scarcely exceeded by his own mother's. Mutually appreciative of each other, Mr. Sergeant, to the day of his death, continued to entertain the favorable opinion which he had early expressed as to his son-in-law's capacity, and his son-in-law in his turn had firm faith in and reliance on Mr. Sergeant, who, though retired from active participation in public affairs on account of years and increasing infirmities, died full of honors. In the years to come when the young lieutenant of Topographical Engineers had risen to the command of a great army, had won a splendid victory against an enemy flushed with constant success, and, at the zenith of his fame, was receiving the plaudits of his countrymen, he was heard to say that he could have wished that these two were present to see that he had not proved unworthy of their faith.

On August 4th, 1851, Lieutenant Meade received his promotion as first lieutenant of Topographical Engineers.

From the manuscripts and printed matter, comprising letters and reports of Lieutenant Meade and reports of the Light-House Board, is drawn what is necessary to give the following résumé of his labors on light-house construction.

On February 26, 1852, we find him writing from Carysfort Reef to Colonel Abert, reporting that the temporary illuminating apparatus of the catoptric kind, to be used while awaiting arrival of the dioptric one, would be ready for lighting on the 10th of March. An absurd contretemps had happened regarding the dioptric apparatus.

It had been received in the New York custom-house, and, remaining there more than nine months, had been sold to the highest bidder. In this, Lieutenant Meade's first report regarding light-house matters, he discusses the various apprehended dangers from wind, wave, and atmosphere, to iron-pile structures—a discussion suggested by popular prejudice against such structures, originating in popular misapprehension of the differences between the construction and the sites, respectively, of Carysfort Reef, Florida, and Minot's Ledge, Massachusetts, where a light-house had been destroyed in a storm.

In August, 1852, we find him, upon a requisition from the Light-House Board, supplying information regarding the Florida light-houses at Carysfort Reef and Sand Key and the Sand Key light-ship. In answer to a request conveyed through the secretary of the Light-House Board, he gave a general scheme for the lighting of the Florida Reef, incidentally discussing the kind of light-house best adapted in his opinion to the purpose—one whose substructure should be neither wholly of masonry nor wholly of piles, but a combination of the two, with masonry for the foundation into which to set the piles. This would, on the one hand, he said, avoid the great first cost of light-houses built wholly of masonry and, on the other, the perishableness of piles in contact with salt water and air. We shall see later that he changed his opinion as to the character of light-house best adapted to the region, and frankly confessed it.

In August, 1853, we find him writing to Colonel Abert a most interesting account of Sand Key light-house, designed, all but the watch-room and lantern, by Civil-Engineer I. W. P. Lewis, of Boston. The description of the optical phenomena exhibited by the particular First Order Fresnel apparatus to be used in this light-house is noteworthy for its clearness of expression on a difficult subject, as it has the precision of a mathematical treatise.

An interesting episode of light-house duty occurred in connection with the Crystal Palace Exposition in 1853. A First Order Fresnel lenticular apparatus intended for the Cape Hatteras light-house, was exhibited at the exposition, and in this connection we have a letter from Admiral (then Captain) du Pont to Lieutenant Meade, urging him to expedite certain routine matters and come if possible to New York to confer with him and superintend the setting up of the apparatus in the Crystal Palace. This apparatus was exhibited for the purpose of giving popular information regarding this, at that period, comparatively unknown invention. Full notes descriptive of the

apparatus are among Lieutenant Meade's papers, in his handwriting, written with a precision and clearness that would have entitled them to a place in an encyclopædia. They were evidently made out (as is shown by the fact that they were found with a slip from a New York newspaper of October 1, 1853, embodying the same information with the amplifications that a newspaper man would make) for the purpose of correctly informing the writer of the printed article, so that he in turn could enlighten the public.

In October, 1853, Lieutenant Meade reported to the secretary of the Light-House Board that the light at Sand Key was exhibited July 20th for the first time, that the plans and estimates for a beacon on Rebecca Shoal were made, that the plans and estimates for a light-house in the northwest channel, Key West Harbor, were nearly ready, that the plans and estimates for light-houses at Cedar Keys Coffin's Patches would be prepared as soon as possible consistently with due care.

In December, 1853, letters passed between the secretary of state, secretary of war, and the chairman of the Light-House Board, showing, on the one part, intention to withdraw Lieutenant Meade from his duties in light-house construction and, on the other, resistance to accomplishment of that intention. His usefulness in the sphere in which he was acting had by this time become so well recognized by the Light-House Board that the intention of relieving him from his duties under it was abandoned.

In January, 1854, he gave full plans and estimates for the light-house to be erected on Sea Horse Key, Florida, discussing the character of the lighting apparatus, the physical characteristics of the key, and the question of the title to the land, and in the following April sent in a report from a preliminary examination of Coffin's Patches, with reference to the erection of a light-house there. In that connection he retracts his opinion, given in 1852, that a combination of masonry, upon which should be superposed iron piles, would be the best construction for such places, giving the maximum stability, and, although greater in first cost, in the interest of true economy. He said that, if for no other reason than the expense of the light-house establishment on coasts so extended as those of the United States, they would not be warranted in adopting that plan. But, independent of that, he said, he must admit that he had acquired more faith than he had had in the durability of structures on iron piles, and that experience and reflection had convinced him that they would, with

proper precautions, last as long as the superstructure of iron. The matter and the manner of this and similar discussions afford admirable examples of Lieutenant Meade's habits of investigation and careful statement, giving due weight to all reasons that could be adduced for or against a project, even his own, neither magnifying nor slurring over any point, to gain a purpose, to ride a hobby; his purpose being single, to get at the truth, and knowing that this often presents itself as many-sided. Frankly, if the conclusions which he had reached came to be modified or reversed in his own mind, he would admit, and even go out of his way to state the fact, so as not to mislead by leaving on record, whether verbal or written, what misrepresented the views which he finally held. This action, growing out of the truthfulness of his nature, pervaded everything he said and did in his daily life.

Among Lieutenant Meade's papers is a detailed description of a lamp invented by him for the light-house at Sand Key, as a substitute for the Candel Lamp, which is operated by clock-work in connection with an oil pump. This pump, the chief point of which is its having its reservoir in the dome of the light-house, and acting by hydraulic pressure, is perfectly well adapted for light-house purposes in climates where the temperatures, as at Sand Key, never sink very low.

On April 13, Lieutenant Meade relieved of his charge of the Fourth Light-House District his old chief, Major Bache, who was ordered to the Pacific coast on light-house construction, and from this time forward to the end of the term of his light-house duties, he administered the affairs of both the Fourth and Seventh Light-House Districts.

Enough has been said to show that in this portion of Lieutenant Meade's work, as elsewhere, he applied himself diligently to his profession, sparing no pains in the performance of the specific duties devolved upon him. When he was relieved from duty in this service by Lieutenant (now Colonel) W. F. Reynolds, his successor in light-house construction, he turned over to him May 31, 1856, the charge of the Fourth and Seventh Light-House Districts, in which the following light-houses were either in process of construction or repair:

Absecum, New Jersey; Cross Ledge, Delaware Bay; Ship John Shoal, Delaware Bay; Brandywine Shoal, Delaware Bay; Reedy Island, Delaware River; Rebecca Shoal Beacon, Florida; Jupiter Inlet, Florida; Coffin's Patches, Florida.

Through an order, of April 24, 1856, relieving Lieutenant Meade from duty in the light-house service, and instructing him "to report as assistant to the officer in charge of the survey of the lakes," he became attached to that work. In the following month—May 19—he was promoted captain of Topographical Engineers for fourteen years continuous service; and by Special Orders No. 70, of May 20, 1857, from the adjutant-general's office, Washington, District of Columbia, Captain Meade was assigned to duty in charge of the lake survey.

The lake survey, begun in 1841, completed in 1881, and but slightly retarded by the Mexican War, was at first of a comparatively rude character, not deserving the name of geodetic. It lacked methods of precision and was greatly hampered by want of proper instruments, astronomical and others. Nothing much was possible at the beginning, with an initial appropriation of only \$15,000, and but small appropriations following, while a vast expanse of country had to be surveyed, of which it was desirable, owing to the entire absence of surveys over it, to embrace as large an area as possible in the least possible time. This, among the other causes mentioned, led to an inadequacy which had to be remedied in the future. The surveys at the very beginning were what were not long afterward regarded as of no higher grade than fine reconnoissances, and were eventually revised with new and proper instruments, and methods of the utmost precision.

With increased appropriations and the ability which these give to furnish proper appliances, the survey rapidly assumed the character of a geodetic survey, measuring its bases with the best apparatus, determining its latitudes, longitudes, and azimuths with approved instruments and methods. These included the hypsometry and the meteorology of the country, the magnetic declination, dip, and intensity, the changes of water-level, the set of currents; and in short, all those departments which belong to a geodetic survey of the first class.

At the beginning of the survey, in 1841, the upper lake region was only sparsely occupied; but settlers were beginning to pour in, and commerce was increasing among the lake ports. At this time, the waters of all the lakes were but imperfectly known, leading yearly to much loss of life and property upon them. There were no charts of the shores of the lakes, except those derived from reconnoissances made by Captain Bayfield, of the British navy, and these, giving the

depth of water only in isolated places, and being inadequate for the needs of American ship-masters, were in little use. Light-houses and beacons were very few, and captains of vessels practically learned the navigation by grounding on shoals or being bilged on unknown rocks. The gales on the lakes were sometimes violent and continuous, and, in stress of weather, any offing in which a vessel might endeavor to lay to might be inadequate to keep her from going ashore. Under these circumstances, the dissemination of knowledge of the lake ports, through charts with directions for their use, the building of light-houses and beacons, and the placing of buoys, were imperative duties of the general government, especially in view of the advance of population and the increase of traffic on the lakes. All these things were within the province of the lake survey, either directly or indirectly, to accomplish through its survey of the region. The magnitude of the work may be imagined from the fact that the American shore-line of the lakes, with their islands, was 4,700 miles in length, and the total amount of the shore-line actually surveyed, including rivers and small streams, amounted to 6,000 miles.

The officers who were successively in charge of the work were in the following order: Captain W. G. Williams, Lieutenant-Colonel James Kearney, Captain J. N. Macomb, Lieutenant-Colonel James Kearney, Captain George G. Meade, Colonel James D. Graham, Lieutenant-Colonel W. F. Reynolds, Major Cyrus B. Comstock, Captain Henry M. Adams, and Major Cyrus B. Comstock. Captain Meade's term of service in charge, being from 1857 to 1861, occurred very nearly in the middle of the whole period of the duration of the lake survey, which, as has been mentioned, was from 1851 to 1881. He entered upon this service at a time when the appliances and methods of the survey had long been of constantly improving geodetic grade, although, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Comstock, in the final report of the lake survey, it did not reach until 1870 the highest refinement in its theodolite work, and in the elimination of instrumental errors. With his usual promptness in throwing himself zealously into whatever he undertook, and improving and perfecting wherever he found anything that he thought was susceptible of improvement, Captain Meade left his mark upon some of the processes committed to his care, introduced others, and carried the survey well forward in its general progress.

As in the case of his light-house duty, Captain Meade came well prepared to the charge of the lake survey. He had that compre-

hensive mental grasp of the country which makes the born surveyor, to perfect which practice alone is needed, and without which no amount of practice is of any avail. This aptitude, which must have been apparent to every one associated with him in his previous or subsequent military career, had, at the time of his attachment to the lake survey, received much, if not final, development through his association, as assistant for some years, with Major Bache. With him a natural tendency to precision was fostered by office-work, and a knowledge of the best practice in at least topography and hydrography was necessarily acquired.

The principal work accomplished by Captain Meade during his administration was the survey of the whole of Lake Huron, and the completion of that of Saginaw Bay. "In 1860," as stated by Lieutenant-Colonel Comstock, in the report before mentioned, "the survey of the northeast end of Lake Michigan was extended southward to include the Fox and Manitou Islands and Grand and Little Traverse Bays, and the data were thus obtained for a much-needed chart of a dangerous part of the lake passed over by the vessels sailing between the Straits of Mackinac and Chicago. Local surveys of a few harbors on Lake Superior were made in 1859, and in 1861 the general survey of the lake was begun at its western end." Lieutenant-Colonel Comstock adds: "The general methods of survey employed by Captain Meade were similar to those followed by Captain Macomb. The nature of the field operations required a combination of triangulation and astronomical work for the determination of the positions of points on the shores of Lake Huron, and made some change necessary in the method of executing the off-shore hydrography. Larger appropriations permitted a considerable expansion of the scope of the survey, the introduction of more accurate methods in obtaining longitudes, and the commencement of a series of magnetic, water-level, and meteorological observations at many points on the lakes." The method of off-shore hydrography adopted, afterward applied to all the lakes, consisted in the running around a lake of a belt, of about ten miles in width, of sounding-lines about one mile apart, beyond and connecting with the terminus of the belt of more minute hydrography along the immediate shore. The general configuration of the bottom of a lake was determined by running a few lines completely across it.

Captain Meade was no sooner appointed to the charge of the lake survey than we find him keenly solicitous to forward the work

upon the lines approved by previous experience, and to increase its efficiency, in connection with which one of his earliest moves was toward general improvement in methods of topography. In his first annual report he asks for \$2,750 "for simultaneous meteorological and water-level observations to be made over the whole lake region." In his fourth annual report, October 20, 1860, he mentions some of the results of these observations, collated with those of outside observers. They showed the highest range of any lake to be that of Lake Michigan, which was 5.5 feet. "There has not yet been time," he says, "since the observations of the survey were commenced, for any general results to be deduced beyond what are perhaps now well known."

Undoubtedly the most notable suggestion which he made and adopted for the survey consisted in a modification of the then existing method for the determination of longitudes by the electric telegraph, known as the American method. This method was invented by Professor Sears C. Walker. Professor Alexander D. Bache, superintendent of the Coast Survey, says in his report for 1853: "He (Professor Walker) invented the application of the galvanic circuit to the recording of astronomical observation; which, under various ingenious modifications, is known as the American method."

The American method invented by Professor Walker for the determination of longitude by star-signals, through the medium of the electric telegraph, consisted simply in the observation at two stations, east and west of each other, of the meridian passage of stars, whose time of transit at each station was recorded by the time of the eastern clock, thus giving in time, which can be reduced to space, the difference between the two stations. Captain Meade's modification was a notable one, although too late to be referred to by the superintendent of the coast survey, seeing that the report quoted was published in 1853, and Captain Meade's modification was not suggested until 1858. It redounds all the more to Captain Meade's credit, however, that he should have originated any good modification after the lapse of so long a time since the discovery of the American method. Captain Meade's language relating to what he had accomplished was scrupulously guarded. He says, in his report for 1859: "So far as my knowledge extends, derived from published reports, it has hitherto been the practice to employ in the observatories but one clock at a time—that is to say, the eastern clock being connected with the main current, and the western clock disconnected from both main and

local circuits, the transit of a star over both meridians was recorded at each station by the time as shown by the eastern clock only, and the difference of the times of transit gave the difference of longitude by the eastern clock. To obtain, therefore, a final result (the mean of the two) had to be observed at each station." Captain Meade proceeds to say, in an explanation which is mainly too technical to be introduced here, that, in discussions with Professor C. A. Young, of Western Reserve College, Hudson, Ohio, he had suggested the convenience of an arrangement, afterward carried out through Professor Young's special skill in electric telegraphy, by which the transit of a star over each meridian was recorded on both eastern and western clocks. The only objection made to this innovation was that the resulting determination of the difference of longitude between stations would be affected by any variation that might take place in the "pass" of the relay-magnet during the passage of the stars between the meridians. "But," he adds, "as the whole amount of this pass was found, from careful experiments, not to exceed 0.03 of a second (three hundredths) its variation in 6.5 minutes (difference of longitude, in time) may be considered as an inappreciable quantity, insensible in comparison with the other errors inseparable from all observations with field instruments." Professor Young remarks, in his official report to Captain Meade, of April 28, 1859, in regard to the modification described: "I believe no other arrangement has ever hitherto effected this double-clock record of each observation, the desirableness of which yourself first suggested to me."

In the telegraphic determination of longitude, just described, Lieutenant C. N. Turnbull was associated with Professor Young. It was under the direction of Captain Meade that Lieutenants Turnbull and Poe did considerable astronomical work, and Lieutenant Smith a good deal of magnetic work, for the survey. Also under him Lieutenant J. L. Kirby Smith executed primary triangulation, while Lieutenant Robert F. Beckham assisted Lieutenant Poe in telegraphic and chronometric determination of longitudes of points on portions of the Canada lake shore.

In addition to his superintendence, he personally executed the measurement of a primary base, much reconnoissance, planning of triangulation, erection of signals, and off-shore hydrography. It is needless to go further into details, as enough has been said of Captain Meade's work on the lake survey to show the activity of his administration. This work is chiefly interesting as forming the last

period of his career before the breaking out of the Rebellion. The surveying season on Lake Superior was verging upon its close, and the surveying parties had not yet returned, when he was relieved from the charge of the survey by Lieutenant James D. Graham, on August 31, 1861, and ordered to duty with the armies in the field.

The period immediately preceding the secession of the Southern States found Captain Meade quietly engaged in his duties in charge of the lake survey. He had watched with deep anxiety the current of events, eagerly scanning the political horizon for some glimmer of hope that the dreaded resort to arms might be averted. No politician, in the petty sense, he was, in the highest, penetrated with a pure love of country, and believed that, if only time could be gained for reflection, the sober second thought of the people would end in their return to common-sense and reason. In accordance, therefore, with his belief in the wisdom of the most conservative course, he had, in the presidential election of 1860, cast his vote for Bell and Everett.

The position at this time of officers of the regular army was an exceedingly trying one, especially for those who, like Captain Meade, were fully alive to the grave responsibility attaching to them as officers of the government, on whose example much depended. The defection of those officers who saw fit to cast their lot with the Confederacy caused the actions of all to be scrutinized, and often misunderstood, in the then excited frame of the public mind. In many instances the suspicions aroused at this period by the careful reticence of officers who felt the delicacy of their position led to want of due appreciation of their services even after they had signalized themselves in the war.

Captain Meade deprecated all violent language, as subordinating reason to passion, as productive of no possible good, and certain to entail evil. For his own part he calmly awaited the unfolding of events, which, if untoward, no action of his should have fostered, and to which, if favorable, he should have the satisfaction of knowing that his own temperate speech and counsel had contributed.

To his mind his own course was clear. He never for a moment doubted where his duty led him. In the strongest language of reason he denounced the Southern leaders who were goading their people into civil war. He expressed himself as deploring the necessity of using force, but as believing, if the necessity should come, in the employment promptly and energetically of the whole power of the government to prevent a disruption of the Union. But that

necessity had not yet arisen, and so, trying to hope for the best, but fearing the worst, he awaited the event, before which he had no national active course to take, but which, if it should arrive, was to place him face to face with his duty as a patriot, to contribute the full measure of his knowledge as a military man to the salvation of his country. As to the result of the war, if it should come, he had from the first no misgivings, provided the gravity of the occasion were realized and the immense resources of the government were properly employed.

He knew well the temper of the people both North and South. He knew well the resentment of a considerable party in the North at what it deemed the pro-slavery aggression of the South for the maintenance of the existing political equilibrium, and of the still more intense feeling of the whole South at what it deemed the encroachment of the North upon the rights growing out of the Constitution. He knew well that political leaders on the one side longed to take the opportunity offered to personal ambition by a most specious pretext, and that those on the other had appeared to justify them by the belief in and proclamation of an irrepressible conflict. He knew well the determined, if once aroused, spirit of the North, and the equally determined and more fiery spirit of the South, which had for a long time been aroused. And, finally, he knew well the immense superiority of the North over the South in men and material resources, and of the contempt of the South for the North, as a people of tradesmen unable to cope with it in war. Knowing all this, as he was well aware few could realize it, through long residence in both parts of the country and intimate acquaintance with prominent men on both sides, he saw how both sides were grievously mistaken in facts and conclusions; that if an appeal to arms were made, the conflict would be terrible; and he strove to impress the solemnity of the crisis upon all with whom he came in contact, in the belief that it was his duty to do what in him lay toward soothing the exasperated state of public feeling in face of a danger which menaced, but which, if averted, might never recur.

In Detroit, as elsewhere, there was intense political excitement, and, as elsewhere, one of its manifestations was distrust of many officers of the army and navy, consequent upon the resignation of a few officers from the South. The views of such officers as Captain Meade were very distasteful to petty politicians and to those thoughtless people who looked upon the impending conflict as a mere riot,

to be suppressed at the first appearance of United States troops, and they were very indignant at any one who attempted to make them fully realize the situation.

Nothing could be a better illustration of the possible injudicious action of a people laboring under strong political excitement, than the circumstance that, in the midst of the ferment in Detroit, a proclamation for a mass meeting of citizens of Detroit for the framing and passage of resolutions, requested the presence of army and navy officers stationed there, in order that they might take the oath of allegiance to the United States. These officers thereupon met at the office of Captain Meade, and with but one exception declined to attend the mass meeting. The grounds which they took for their refusal were: That it was unbecoming in officers of the government to be present at such a meeting, especially for such a purpose; that it would be a dangerous precedent for officers to take an oath at the demand and in the presence of a crowd, and that the callers of the meeting were unjustified in making such a demand. They then drew up, signed, and forwarded to the War Department a paper expressing their willingness to take the oath of allegiance whenever called upon by the War Department.

The action of these officers in declining to attend caused a great deal of violent language in regard to it to be indulged in by some people at the mass meeting, which dispersed after the usual patriotic speeches and resolutions. Nothing of moment came of the affair, although it is believed that the stand taken by the officers was the cause, for a time, of suspicion and ill-will toward them among some worthy people of that part of the country, who later became satisfied of the propriety of their course.

Soon after the firing on Fort Sumter and the first call of President Lincoln for volunteers, Captain Meade made urgent and repeated requests to the government for active duty. No attention being paid to them, he, late in June, 1861, went to Washington and protested against being retained in charge of the lake survey, and applied for increased rank in one of the new regiments then being raised. He was promised that something should be done for him, but nothing came of it, and he returned to Detroit.

In addition to his duties in charge of the lake survey he had been placed in charge of the erection of certain light-houses on Lake Superior. All the younger officers associated with him had been ordered away and were actively engaged in raising and organizing the

large bodies of volunteers in the different States. Thoroughly dispirited at being retained on civil duty in time of war, at seeing several of his juniors in his own corps already promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, the battle of Bull Run fought, new levies of troops called for, and at still hearing nothing from Washington, he began to fear that his chances for active service were fast passing away. In this state of affairs he started early in August for Lake Superior, in performance of his duties, and while there received orders to turn over those duties to Colonel James D. Graham, one of the oldest officers of his corps, and to repair to Washington to take charge of the recruiting and organizing of one of the companies of Topographical Engineers, lately authorized by Congress.

The long delay, which had been caused apparently by disinclination to confer higher rank upon him, coupled with the avowed objection of the department to allowing officers of the staff corps of the regular army to accept positions in the volunteer service, had led to his determination to resign his position in the regular army, in order to accept the colonelcy of one of the regiments of Michigan volunteers, which had been offered to him by Governor Austin Blair of that State. He was about leaving Detroit for Washington, in obedience to his orders, when, much to his surprise and gratification, he was officially notified of his appointment, on August 31, 1861, as brigadier-general of volunteers, with orders to report to General McClellan, then commanding the forces about Washington.

Some months previously to this, he had, in anticipation of entering upon active service, broken up his house in Detroit and sent his family back to their old home in Philadelphia. He therefore lost no time in hastening to Washington and reporting to General McClellan, by whom he was assigned to the division commanded by Major-General George A. McCall, known as the Pennsylvania Reserves. General McCall, who had not yet fully organized his command, allowed General Meade to remain in Washington for a few days, for the purpose of perfecting his outfit, which had been neglected in the haste of his departure, in his anxiety to reach the field. While thus engaged he enjoyed the society of Mrs. Meade and his eldest son, John Sergeant Meade, who had joined him in Philadelphia on his way through that city from Detroit to Washington, and who remained with him until he was notified by General McCall to join the command. On his reporting, he was assigned by General McCall to the command of the Second Brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves.

The division of General McCall, known as the Pennsylvania Reserves, had been authorized by special act of legislature, passed at the instance of Governor Andrew G. Curtin, of Pennsylvania, after the quota of that State, under the first call of the President for troops, had been filled. They were organized as a "Reserve Corps of the Commonwealth," and consisted of thirteen regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, one of artillery, and placed under the command of Major-General McCall. On the urgent demand of the authorities at Washington for reinforcements, after the defeat of the Union army at Bull Run, this force had been despatched as rapidly as possible to that city, and were mustered into the service of the United States as a division which became part of the Army of the Potomac, then being organized by Major-General George B. McClellan.

General Meade, now in the forty-sixth year of his age, was about to enter upon a field of labor entirely different from that in which he had been engaged for the preceding thirteen years. The pursuits which he had so relished were to be laid aside at the call of duty, and from the peaceful scenes of his scientific labors, for which he was so eminently fitted, he was to betake himself to the stir of camps, to arduous marches, and the horrid din of battle. Many were the regrets expressed at this time by those with whom he had come in contact in the course of those labors, at the loss to science of one who had evinced for it such high qualifications. So strong was this feeling on the part of Professor Henry, the distinguished secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, that he endeavored to dissuade General Meade from seeking active service. They had been thrown much together during the last few years while General Meade was conducting the lake survey, and Professor Henry had come to regard him as one possessed of so great aptitude for that class of work that he was unwilling to lose him from the ranks of science, to which he was himself so enthusiastically devoted. Professor Henry even went so far as to call upon Mrs. Meade, on the occasion of a visit of his to Philadelphia, for the express purpose of beseeching her to lend her aid to prevent a step which would result in so great a loss to science. From his point of view he regarded it as sheer waste for one possessed of the scientific qualifications of General Meade to relinquish his brilliant future in the field of science, and, as he expressed it, become mere food for powder.

There was now, however, no question of choice. The general knew full well where honor and duty lay. His wife, too, would have

been the last of all the world to obstruct the path which led to them. On the contrary, sad as might be separation and torturing anxiety, their consideration could not daunt one who held that the place of every brave man was in the field. And so, instead of attempting to dissuade her husband, she had done all in her power to procure him the rank with which, in recognition of his military talents and experience, he could fittingly appear there. The tenderest appreciation of her self-abnegation is often expressed in the letters which follow, which evince throughout a devotion and the recognition of the fullest return, which alone can explain the possibility of one so situated as he was through long years of march, battle, defeat, victory, pouring out his whole soul through pages, teeming with incidents of war, in joy, sorrow, solicitude, thanksgiving, in love and prayer for home. As for him, nothing could give a better idea of the sentiments by which he was inspired at this momentous period of his country's history than the words which he addressed to a friend in a letter written only a few days before he took the field. "I cordially agree with you," he said, "in earnest prayers that a merciful Providence would so guide the hearts of the rulers on both sides as to terminate this unnatural contest. But, as for myself, I have ever held it to be my duty to uphold and maintain the Constitution and resist the disruption of this Government. With this opinion, I hold the other side responsible for the existing condition of affairs. Besides, as a soldier, holding a commission, it has always been my judgment that duty required I should disregard all political questions, and obey orders. I go into the field with these principles, trusting to God to dispose of my life and actions in accordance with my daily prayer, that His will and not mine should be done."

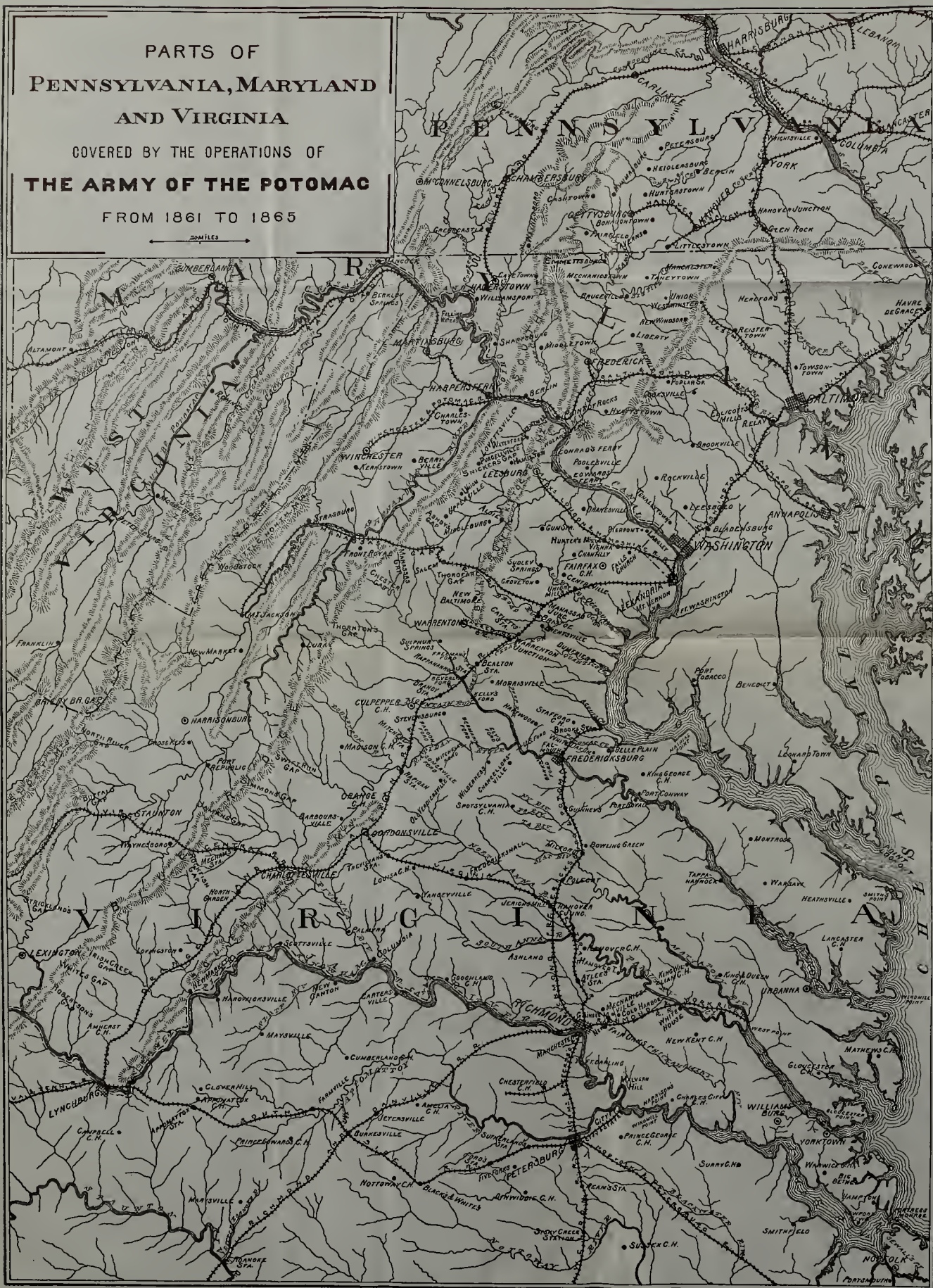
To these letters is at this point substantially committed the task of exhibiting the career of General Meade during the next four years. They can appear meagre only by comparison with the naturally ardent desire of all to know much more than they or any other one work on the subject, however voluminous, can tell; for they are replete with information from one whose mental poise was never disturbed, however hurried and exciting the events around him, and faithfully and unremittingly trace, as far as circumstances and the nature of private letters will allow, the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac from its march from the defences of Washington to the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox Court House.



PARTS OF
PENNSYLVANIA, MARYLAND
AND VIRGINIA

COVERED BY THE OPERATIONS OF
THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC
FROM 1861 TO 1865

30 MILES



PART IV

CIVIL WAR LETTERS

1861-1865

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

IN CAMP, *September 22, 1861.*

I hope you will not be very much put out at not receiving a letter earlier from me, but I have really been very much occupied, and yesterday, in addition to other duties, we had a grand division review for the Prince de Joinville¹ and others. I was so sorry you and Sergeant² had gone. The review passed off very well, pretty much the same as you saw, except that, having been advised of the arrival of the distinguished strangers only the night before, Gauttier did not have the privilege of sticking McCall for a fine collation. McClellan, however, took the Frenchmen over to the Chain Bridge and by Ball's Cross-Roads.

I felt very sad when you drove off, and could hardly shake off the idea that I was looking on you perhaps for the last time—at any rate, for a long while; but I trust matters will be more favorable to us, and that it will please a just and merciful Providence to permit us to be happy once more, united, and free from immediate trouble. There has been nothing new since you left. We have daily the usual announcement that the enemy have been seen somewhere above us, on the opposite side; but they confine their operations to letting us see them. What they are going to do, no one without the gift of second sight can possibly imagine. In the meantime we are becoming better prepared to meet them, and after awhile if they don't show themselves, I presume we shall have to hunt them up. I find camp life agrees very well with me, and the active duties I have entered on are quite agreeable. Sometimes I have a little sinking at the heart, when I reflect that perhaps I may fail at the grand scratch; but I try to console myself with the belief that I shall

¹ Third son of Louis Philippe, King of the French 1830-1848.

² Son of General Meade.

probably do as well as most of my neighbors, and that your firm faith must be founded on some reasonable groundwork.

William Palmer brought Kuhn¹ out to see me, who presented letters from Harrison Smith² and Henry Fisher, asking me to assist him in procuring a staff appointment. He said he supposed my staff was full, but would be glad to serve on it as a volunteer, as pay was no object to him, but simply a position and a chance to see service. While I was talking to him I received Charley Cadwalader's letter. I then told him C.'s declination made a vacancy, but I did not know whether I could appoint a civilian, not commissioned in the volunteers; that McClellan, McCall and myself were trying to have young Watmough³ appointed in this manner, which if we succeeded in would be a precedent. He expressed himself greatly pleased, and said he would await the result in Washington.

HEADQUARTERS SECOND BRIGADE, McCALL'S DIVISION,
TENALLYTOWN, *September 24, 1861.*

Nothing of importance has transpired since I last wrote to you. I am getting pretty familiar with my duties, which thus far have been principally paper work. You would be astonished to see the amount of writing and papering required of a general in the field. A good deal of it is regular circumlocution, or "How not to do it." Nevertheless, being regulations, one has to comply with the requirements, however foolish they may seem. Our mess is very comfortable. Dr. Stocker is caterer, and I have a young man from one of the regiments acting as my adjutant general, till the arrival of Captain Baird. Captain Ringwalt, a Chester County farmer, has been assigned to me as quartermaster. He is said to be a most respectable and wealthy farmer of Chester County.

TENALLYTOWN, *September 26, 1861.*

Yesterday, Baldy Smith⁴ made one of his reconnoissances, and our division was held in readiness all day to move at a moment's notice to support him, in case of emergency. He returned, however,

¹ James Hamilton Kuhn, of Philadelphia, afterward A. D. C. to General Meade and killed at the Seven Days' Battle, June 30, 1862.

² Brother-in-law of Mrs. Meade.

³ William Watmough, cousin of Mrs. Meade, afterward A. D. C. to General Meade.

⁴ Brigadier-General William F. Smith, commanding a division, and an old Detroit friend of the Meade family.

without encountering any force of consequence, though we could see him from my tent firing his artillery at small bodies hovering around him. To-day being the day set apart by the President for fasting, humiliation and prayer, all duties were suspended and the day observed as Sunday. I have a letter from Willie,¹ written in good spirits, and saying he expects to take the field in a few weeks, with the First Battalion of his regiment.

TENALLYTOWN, *September 30, 1861—3 P. M.*

We have been under arms all day, and once started for up river, believing the enemy were crossing some fifteen miles above us. The report proved erroneous, but we keep all ready to move at a moment's notice. They have retired from our front on the other side of the river, and are showing themselves above and below. We cannot tell what they are about, but I believe we are ready for them, let them come in what direction they choose.

TENALLYTOWN, *October 6, 1861.*

I have not written you since the few lines the day we expected to have a fight. The stampede lasted for thirty-six hours. I believe it is now generally known that McClellan had planned a surprise, which, if he had succeeded in, would have brought on a big fight, in which our division was to have a part; but the sudden disappearance of the enemy frustrated the plan. There is no doubt they were apprised of it, though McClellan asserts he did not tell even the generals who were to share in it till the very moment of action, and that he is now convinced it is impossible to do or attempt anything without their knowing it. At present all is quiet, the enemy having retired to his old lines about Manassas. His threatening Washington was a bravado, hoping to draw McClellan out. Failing in this, he has fallen back, thinking we would rush after him, and thus give them a chance to get us at a disadvantage. They are, as Woodbury said, great on strategy, but I guess they will find after awhile that our movements are not to be governed by theirs, and that McClellan is not going to move until he is ready, and then not in the direction they want him.

Macomb has been made a lieutenant colonel, as chief Topographical Engineer of McClellan's staff—the least they could do for him, as all the rest of the chiefs have been made generals and colonels.

¹ William Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade, captain 12th U. S. Inf. Afterward wounded at Gravelly Run, Va., March 29, 1865. Died April 11, 1865.

*To John Sergeant Meade:*¹

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 12, 1861.*

I was glad to hear you had enjoyed your trip to West Point. I was sure you would be delighted with the scenery, which is said of its kind to be unequaled. I agree with you that the student at West Point has every advantage in his favor in the regularity of the hours there and the absence of distraction. Still, you must remember, a great deal more is required of them than at any of our colleges, and that without a mathematical turn of mind, which is a decided gift of nature, no advantages such as above mentioned will enable a student to overcome all the difficulties in his path, though, undoubtedly, they render his task easier than it otherwise would be. Day before yesterday we were moved across the Potomac, and are now in position some four miles in advance of where you saw John Markoe,² being just beyond Langley, where Baldy Smith had his skirmish.

Hamilton Kuhn did get a commission from the Governor of Pennsylvania, but it was not the right kind. He has been again to Harrisburg and procured another, and is now in Washington, qualifying himself, so that I expect him to join me every day. He appears a very gentlemanly fellow, and is so anxious to see service, that I doubt not I shall find him very useful.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 12, 1861—9 P. M.*

The enemy have appeared in our vicinity, and we have as much reason to believe they are going to attack us as we ever can have with an enemy as alert as they are and whose movements are wrapped in such mystery. Perhaps their movements to-day are like many preceding ones, only feints, either to harass us or draw us out. If they ever are going to attack us, now is their time, as General McClellan has advanced some miles beyond his line of entrenchments and is on comparatively new ground, where every day will enable him to make himself stronger and their probability of success less. My own opinion has hitherto been that they would act on the defensive and await our attack, but the movement of McClellan has possibly caused a change in their tactics, and they may have made up their minds to accept his offer of battle and try their chances at the offen-

¹ Son of General Meade.

² John Markoe, captain 71st Regt. Pa. Vols.

sive. For my part, I hope it is so. We have a strong position, in its natural character; we are near our reserves in Washington, and we have strong lines to fall back upon in case we cannot hold our present advanced lines. In other words, the advantages are as great on our side as we can ever expect to have them. The whole question turns upon the behavior of our men. If they stand up to their work like men, and really fight with a determination to do or die, I think there is no doubt of our triumphant success. Of course, if they cannot be brought to this point, all plans and calculations must fail. You will doubtless be anxious to know what is my private opinion of our force, and I would not hesitate to tell you if I had a decided opinion. Much, as I have always told you, will depend on the turn events take. If we are successful in the beginning in repelling the attack, I think they can be kept up to the work; but if by any accident the fortune is against us in the commencement, I fear they will become demoralized. They do not any of them, officers or men, seem to have the least idea of the solemn duty they have imposed upon themselves in becoming soldiers. Soldiers they are not in any sense of the word. Brave men they may be, and I trust in God will prove themselves; but at this very moment, when we have every reason to believe by to-morrow's dawn our lives may be imperiled, if not taken from us, I doubt if any of the numerous living beings around me realize in the slightest degree what they may have to meet. For myself, I await calmly the decree of an over-ruling Providence. I am here from a sense of duty, because I could not with honor be away, and whatever befalls me, those of my blood who survive me can say, I trust, that I did my duty.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 14, 1861.*

We see their pickets and lookouts on all prominent points in front of us, and this afternoon towards sunset they opened a battery on our left (I mean by ours, McCall's Division). I saw the flash of the guns, but could not see where the shot fell, or at what part of our line they were firing. I think we are on the eve of important events, and that it will not be long before we have a struggle. For my part, I do not desire it postponed, and was quite disappointed they did not attack us.

The country is becoming impatient at the apparent inactivity of our troops, and I have no doubt, if the enemy afford McClellan any chance which he deems favorable, he will attack them.

I went over to-day to see our friend W. F. Smith, commanding the division next to us. Madame was there, and I went over by invitation to luncheon and to see her. She asked where you were, and I said in Philadelphia, at which she expressed a little surprise, when I told her you had a brigade of infantry that required as much talent to command and as close attention to duties as our brigades. I heard Miss Anne Biddle was in camp the other day, visiting Colonel Charles J.¹ By-the-by, I don't remember having told you that Charley's regiment (the Bucktails, as they are called, from having this appendage in their caps) was in my brigade for a week, and when taken from me, expressed, Colonel and all, the greatest regret, for in that short time we had become most excellent friends. I met to-day Lieutenant Colonel Penrose,² who said he was the son of the former Solicitor of the Treasury, and a brother of Dr. Penrose. This makes the third of your connections in my brigade.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 18, 1861.*

I had just seated myself to write you a nice long letter, when orders came to march to-morrow, requiring me to stir about and give the requisite directions. The enemy, it is understood, have fallen back to their old lines at Bull Run. They have had a force above us at Leesburg, which it is believed they are withdrawing. The object of our expedition is to advance some twelve or fifteen miles to the front, to reconnoitre the country, and also with the hope of cutting off some of their troops coming down from Leesburg. We go with the whole division, some twelve thousand strong, with three batteries of artillery, and if we encounter any of their troops, will have a very pretty chance for a nice little fight of our own. It is very late, and I have to be in the saddle very early. I am quite well.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 21, 1861—9 P. M.*

We returned this evening from our expedition, which, so far as my brigade was concerned, was very peaceful. The First Brigade, under Reynolds,³ advanced some fifteen miles, and encountered the enemy's pickets, one of whom was killed; nobody hurt on our side. I advanced some ten miles and saw nothing of them. We remained

¹ Charles J. Biddle, colonel 42d Regt. Pa. Vols.

² Wm. M. Penrose, lieutenant-colonel 35th Regt. Pa. Vols.

³ John F. Reynolds, afterward commanding the left wing of the Army of the Potomac, killed at the battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863.

out three days, getting an accurate knowledge of the country, and then returned to this camp. No sooner are we back than orders come to be ready at a moment's notice to go again, and all is now excitement and bustle, though it is night-time. I do not know the meaning, except that something is being done on some other part of the line and we are wanted to support the movement.

CAMP PIERPONT, [VA.], *October 24, 1861—5 A. M.*

I have only time to write you a few lines, to say that late last night orders came to start early this morning. The direction of our march is not known, but I suppose it to be in co-operation with Banks and Stone, on the river above us.¹ Indeed, the general impression among outsiders is that we ought not to have been withdrawn from Dranesville, as at that place we were within ten miles of the force that attacked Stone. For myself, I ask no questions and don't speculate. I know how impossible it is for outsiders to understand everything. Therefore all I can now say is, that we march.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *October 24, 1861.*

After waiting all day in momentary expectation of orders to advance, we were informed this evening that the movement was postponed. I am of course in ignorance of what was in contemplation, but presume our movement had reference to what has taken place on the river above us. You are doubtless apprised of the disastrous affair that has occurred there with part of Stone's and Banks's commands. As far as I can gather, an unauthorized scouting party reported a small body of the enemy, when an attempt was made to capture them, which resulted in our people, eighteen hundred strong, being driven back into the river, where many lives were sacrificed and prisoners taken. The whole affair was a bungle from the beginning. First, in the officer's sending out a scouting party without authority; second, in not reinforcing him when it was found the enemy were in force. The worst part of the business is that at the very time our people were contending against such odds, the advance of McCall's Division was only *ten* miles off, and had we been ordered forward, instead of back, we could have captured the whole of them. Of course, we were in ignorance of what was going on, and I presume

¹ Engagement at Ball's Bluff, Va., October 21, 1861. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 921 (O. R.).

McClellan was not fully advised of what was taking place, or he would have undoubtedly sent us on. I suppose they concealed from him the true state of the case, and made such reports that induced him to believe all was going well. Such *contre-temps* are very demoralizing, and particularly unfortunate at this juncture, when we are meeting with so many reverses on a small scale.

I should like to know what John Markoe says of the affair at Edwards' ¹ and Conrad's Ferry.¹ I was glad to see his name was not among the casualties. Baker² was colonel of the regiment he was attached to. Wistar,³ the lieutenant colonel, is said to be mortally wounded. It is reported that out of the eighteen hundred who crossed the river, only three hundred got back, the balance being either killed, drowned, or prisoners. The weather has been very disagreeable, first raining hard day and night, and now very cold, with high northwest winds. The men in consequence suffer a great deal, particularly on the march, when we go without tents or shelter of any kind.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 7, 1861.*

I ought to have written to you before, but I have been very busy, having been put on a court-martial as president, and it being the first time in my military service of thirty years that I ever had anything whatever to do with a court, I have to spend much time in booking myself up.

McCall showed me to-day a very severe letter from McClellan, commenting on the state of discipline of his division. I think the report of the officers who inspected us unfair and illiberal. Whilst I am aware our discipline is much below what it ought to be, yet I deny the assertion that we are worse than the rest of the army. McCall was very much mortified, and I am afraid McClellan has been prejudiced against him by the talking of others.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 12, 1861.*

This afternoon, while at dinner, I was greatly surprised and delighted at seeing a carriage drive up with Captain and Mrs. Scott. He said he was in Washington before a Court of Inquiry; that he had not the slightest fear of the result, having conscientiously performed

¹ Engagement at Ball's Bluff, Va., October 21, 1861.

² Edward D. Baker, colonel 71st Regt. Pa. Vols.

³ Isaac J. Wistar, lieutenant-colonel 71st Regt. Pa. Vols.

his duty. He explained the cause of complaint, which was his not having reported to the Gulf Squadron; which he could not do, having captured a vessel that he had evidence would not have been condemned at Key West, though a legal capture. I hope his expectations will be realized, and that no harm will come to him. They had driven out to see Baldy Smith and myself. After spending a little while in my tent, I rode part of the way back with them. To-day we have the cheering news from the Naval Expedition;¹ du Pont² has covered himself with glory. The whole affair was most skillfully executed, and reflects great credit on the navy. It has inspirited all of us, and the talk is now, When are we going to do something? I should not be surprised if a movement was made in a very few days. For my part I hope so.

To John Sergeant Meade:

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 14, 1861.*

I am very badly off for horses. The horse³ I first got has been an excellent horse in his day, but General Hunter broke him down at Bull Run.⁴ The other one has rheumatism in his legs, and has become pretty much unserviceable. This has always been my luck with horses; I am never fortunate with them. I should like much to have a really fine horse, but it costs so much I must try to get along with my old hacks.

I am very well satisfied with all my staff, and believe I have as nice a set of gentlemen as any brigadier in the field. Both Kuhn and Watmough are particularly clever fellows, and Captain Baird is a very nice fellow, too. We all get along most harmoniously and only want a little more to do. You have of course rejoiced over the glorious achievement of our navy at Port Royal.

¹ Battle of Port Royal, S. C., November 7, 1861.

² Captain Samuel F. Du Pont, U. S. N., in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

³ "Baldy," remained with General Meade in the field until the spring of 1864. He was wounded twice at the first battle of Bull Run under General Hunter, and under General Meade he was wounded in the flank at the second battle of Bull Run, shot through the neck at Antietam, wounded at Fredericksburg, and again at Gettysburg, the ball remaining in his body. In the spring of 1864, General Meade, fearing that he might become an embarrassment in the campaign which was about to commence, sent him to Philadelphia, where he outlived his master.

⁴ First battle of Bull Run, Va., July 21, 1861.

To Mrs. George G. Meade :

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., November 17, 1861.

I went into town yesterday to attend to my Lake Survey accounts at the Treasury, which I believe are now all explained satisfactorily, so that should anything happen to me, you will remember that my public accounts are all settled, and that my vouchers, etc., are in a tin box in Major Woodruff's office, Topographical Bureau.

People who think the war is about to close, because we have achieved one signal success, are very short-sighted. I agree with you in thinking it has only just begun. Think of Percy Drayton¹ firing into a fort commanded by his own brother!² Is not this enough to make one heartsick? We hear the news of the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell.³ I hope their being taken out of a British mail packet will not bring us into trouble with John Bull. If it is true that he is disposed to quarrel with us, this gives him a very pretty chance to begin.

November 17—9 P. M.

The foregoing part of my letter was written this A. M. General Brooks dined with us, we having a nice green goose for dinner. General McCall paid me a visit during the afternoon, but had no news to communicate. Every one is speculating, but no one knows what is going to be done; all we can do is to wait patiently.

I am very much pleased with Hamilton Kuhn. He is a gentleman and intelligent, and it is quite refreshing to have him for an associate.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., November 21, 1861.

I intended to have written to you last evening, but came back so tired from the grand review that I went right to bed. I have no doubt the papers will give you a glowing description of this event, so long talked about. For my part, all I can say is that I got up at half-past 3 A. M., the morning very cold, with a heavy frost lying on the ground. At 6 o'clock we moved and marched nine miles to the ground, at Bailey's Cross-Roads, where we arrived about 10 o'clock,

¹ Percival Drayton commanded the *Pocahontas* in the Port Royal, S. C., expedition November 7, 1861.

² Thomas F. Drayton, brigadier-general C. S. A. Led the Confederate troops in the Port Royal expedition.

³ Commissioners from the Confederate States Government sent to Great Britain and France, and captured by the United States Government on the British steamer *Trent*, November 8, 1862.

and were posted in a field where the mud was six inches deep, and where we stood for four hours, after which we marched past General McClellan, and then home, where we arrived, tired, hungry and disgusted, at about 7 P. M. The day was cloudy, cold and raw, and altogether the affair as a "spectacle" was a failure. I understand the object of the movement was to show the soldiers what a large and well disciplined army had been collected together, and thus give them confidence in themselves. I fear standing in the mud for four hours and marching nine miles there and back took away greatly from the intended effect. My own brigade did very well going to the review and on the ground, but returning I found it utterly impossible to keep the men in the ranks. I used all my influence with the officers first, and afterwards with the men, but ineffectually, and at last abandoned it in disgust, one regiment being by the time it reached camp pretty much all broken up and scattered. I felt annoyed when I got back, and wearied at the fruitless efforts I had made. There was a notion that the Grand Review was to be converted into a fight by making a dash at Centreville, ten miles distant from the ground, but, instead of this, the enemy made a dash at us, driving in our pickets on several parts of the line and killing several of them. They also kept up a practicing with their heavy guns all the afternoon, as if in defiance of our parade. General Smith required his division to cheer McClellan. He passed our division front, but, not being posted in the programme, we were silent.

The foregoing part of this letter was written in the court room, where a poor devil was being tried for sleeping on his post.

As to horses, I did the best I could. The truth is, the exposure is so great, it is almost impossible to keep a horse in good health. Several of the officers of my staff have suffered in the same way. I have no doubt you can get me a good horse for two hundred and fifty dollars. I can do that here; but where are the two hundred and fifty dollars to come from? Remember, I have paid now two hundred and seventy-five dollars already.

To John Sergeant Meade:

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 22, 1861.*

I received yesterday your letter of the 17th, with its enclosure, the "Loves of Harlequin and Columbine," which I read with much pleasure. The papers, I presume, have given you glowing accounts

of the Grand Review. I should have been delighted for you to have seen it, as I expect, to an outsider, who could go where he pleased and take in all the views, the sight must have been very grand, particularly when the troops began to march past the reviewing officer. You will see from my account to your mother that we who took part in it, like the frogs in the fable, had but little appreciation of the fun we were affording others.

I got a letter to-day from old Potter. He is quartermaster in Chicago, up to his eyes in business, spending, he says, sometimes over a hundred thousand dollars a day. He begs to be remembered to your mother and yourself, and says that Detroit is no longer the same place, and that he never expects to have such nice times again as he had on the survey under me. Altogether, his letter exhibits quite a gratifying amount of feeling.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., November 24, 1861.

There is but little new here. My duties at the court occupy me nearly all day, and in the afternoon, towards evening, I take a ride through the guards to see that they are on the alert and vigilant. The enemy do not show themselves nearer than eight miles, where they have their pickets. Now and then they make a dash at some part of the line with their cavalry, and drive ours in, killing and wounding a few, when they retire again to their old lines.

In to-day's papers we have Jeff Davis's¹ report to the Confederate Congress. A careful perusal of it leads me to think it is more desponding and not so braggadocio a document as those we have hitherto had from him. I have no doubt the blockade and the heavy expenditures required to maintain their large armies are telling on them, and that sensible people among them are beginning to say, *cui bono*? and where is this to end? If such should be the case, it proves the sagacity of our policy in keeping them hemmed in by land and sea, and forcing them to raise large forces by threatening them at many different points. You know I have always told you this would be a war of dollars and cents—that is, of resources—and that if the North managed properly, the South ought to be first exhausted and first to feel the ruinous effects of war. In other words, to use my familiar expression, it was and is a Kilkenny-cat business, in which the North,

¹ Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy.

being the biggest cat and having the largest tail, ought to have the endurance to maintain the contest after the Southern gentleman was all gone. In the meantime, we at the North should continue the good work of setting aside such men as Fremont¹ and upholding such sentiments as those of Sherman, who declares the private property of Secessionists must be respected. Let the ultras on both sides be repudiated, and the masses of conservative and moderate men may compromise and settle the difficulty.

To-day has been raw and disagreeable; this afternoon we had a slight spit of snow. Camping out in such weather is very hard upon the men, and the health of the army is being seriously impaired.

I fear no amount of personal energy or efforts to do what is right will ever make these volunteers into soldiers. The radical error is in their organization and the election of officers, in most cases more ignorant than the men. It is most unsatisfactory and trying to find all your efforts unsuccessful, and the consciousness of knowing that matters grow daily worse instead of better is very hard to bear. The men are good material, and with good officers might readily be moulded into soldiers; but the officers, as a rule, with but very few exceptions, are ignorant, inefficient and worthless. They have not control or command over the men, and if they had, they do not know what to do with them. We have been weeding out some of the worst, but owing to the vicious system of electing successors which prevails, those who take their places are no better. I ought not perhaps to write this to you, and you must understand it is all in confidence, but you have asked me to tell you everything freely and without disguise, and I have complied with your request.

I had a visit to-day from Mr. Henry, of the Topographical Bureau, who says he saw the review on Wednesday and thought our division looked and marched the best of all.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 26, 1861.*

The weather continues quite cold. We had a slight fall of snow, and every night a heavy frost. No indications that I can see of a movement, and every one is beginning to be tired of inactivity, and to wonder when something will be done. The court martial still continues to occupy my time from 9 to 3 o'clock each day, but I hope to get through with it now in a day or two.

¹ Major-General John Charles Fremont, U. S. A.

Charley Biddle has left his regiment and gone to Philadelphia, preparatory to taking his seat in Congress. He is really a great loss to this division. The command of his regiment devolves upon Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Kane.

Did you see Colonel Willcox was among those selected to be put to death, in case our Government hung any of the privateersmen condemned? I have no doubt they will carry out their threat and hang man for man, if we persist in the folly of denying them rights which we have always claimed for ourselves.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *November 28, 1861.*

If you remember what I told you before I came here, you will recollect that I always said McClellan had to be tried. That while he had shown in other positions talents and a mental organization leading to the belief that he was one who would make himself equal to the position, yet that fact had yet to be established. I fear he allows himself to be too much biased by personal influences and old associations. He has already in my judgment committed two grave errors. First, in whitewashing Stone, who was and is responsible for the Ball's Bluff disaster, greater in my judgment than Bull Run, inasmuch as it was clearly the result of bad generalship. Secondly, in permitting himself to be biased by tittle-tattle about McCall, and visiting his censure of that officer on the whole division under his command. Both these instances show a want of moral courage, without which no man can be a great commander.

We had a little excitement yesterday, in a scout from our division by our cavalry. They went some fourteen miles in front, capturing one of the enemy's pickets, and on their return were fired into by a party, whom they repulsed, killing several and bringing in eleven prisoners. Colonel Bayard (a young man you may remember at the first review, from the protuberance on his cheek, produced by an arrow wound), the commander, behaved with conspicuous gallantry. One of the prisoners confessed he took deliberate aim at him. He had two balls through his clothes and his horse killed under him.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 2, 1861.*

The most important piece of intelligence I have to communicate is that I have bought another horse. He is a fine black horse that was brought out to camp by a trader, for sale. I bought him on the advice and judgment of several friends who pretend a knowledge in

horse flesh, of which I am entirely ignorant. I exchanged Sargie's¹ horse and gave a hundred and twenty-five dollars boot. As Sargie's horse cost me a hundred and twenty-five dollars, it makes my black turn me out two hundred and fifty dollars, a very high price. But Sargie's horse was entirely broken down and worthless from exposure, and was pretty much a dead loss to me. I hope my black will turn out well. Thus far he is very satisfactory, being full of spirit and quite handsome; but there is no telling when you get a horse from a regular trader what a few days of possession may bring forth. Everything now looks as if * * * news was correct, that we were not to advance from our present position, but look to Southern expeditions for action on the enemy. We are not positively informed that we are in winter quarters, but the men are allowed to make themselves as comfortable as they can. I cannot say I am pleased with this—to remain inactive for four months.

The poor doctor who was wounded in the cavalry skirmish the other day has since died. He was only twenty-six years old, and leaves a young wife, who reached here three hours after his death. Such afflictions should reconcile us to our lesser troubles.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 5, 1861.*

Yesterday morning General McCall invited me to ride into town with him, he knowing I wished to go in to draw my pay and attend to other business. The day before we had gone towards Dranesville on a foraging expedition, Reynolds's brigade and mine, Reynolds in front. We collected some fifty wagons of forage, but saw and heard nothing of the enemy. On getting into town I paid the Turnbulls and Tom Lee a visit. I found at the former place Master Charley, who had just arrived with despatches for McClellan from General Butler. The expedition they are organizing is to rendezvous at Ship Island, near New Orleans, and I have no doubt looks to that important place.

This morning I attended to my business, and after dining, rode out to camp. Here I find orders from McCall for another expedition towards Dranesville to-morrow, I believe for foraging purposes, though he does not state. I am, however, to have the command and to be in front this time, and should not object to having a little brush with the enemy, if there are any about the neighborhood where we are going.

¹ Son of General Meade.

I am very much pleased with my new horse, all except the price, which is pretty digging.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *Sunday, December 8, 1861.*

My last letter was written on Thursday evening. The next day I went, in command of my brigade, on a foraging expedition. We proceeded some ten miles from here, and within two of Dranesville, to the farm of a man named Gunnell, who was reported not only as an active Secessionist, but one who was making arrangements to place his crops in the possession of the Confederate Army. We arrived on the ground about 12 M., and in two hours loaded some sixty wagons, stripping his place of everything we thought would be useful to the enemy or that we could use ourselves. I never had a more disagreeable duty in my life to perform. The man was absent, but his sister, with his farm and house servants, were at home. The great difficulty was to prevent the wanton and useless destruction of property which could not be made available for military purposes. The men and officers got into their heads that the object of the expedition was the punishment of a rebel, and hence the more injury they inflicted, the more successful was the expedition, and it was with considerable trouble they could be prevented from burning everything. It made me sad to do such injury, and I really was ashamed of our cause, which thus required war to be made on individuals. The enemy were within ten miles of us, but did not make their appearance, and we returned to camp with our booty by nightfall.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 9, 1861.*

Most persons here pooh-pooh the news from England, but I think it very serious, as it confirms my apprehension that England would feel herself compelled to intervene in our domestic troubles, and would seize the first plausible pretext for doing so. There is no earthly doubt but that we were justified by the laws of nations in arresting Mason and Slidell. It is, however, a question whether it was done in the right mode, and whether Wilkes ought not to have captured the vessel and carried it into port, where an admiralty judge could have settled the legal points involved, and have ordered the release of the prisoners, in case their arrest was contrary to national law. This I understand is the point England now makes, viz.: that no naval officer is empowered to decide on the spot questions of international law—which can only be settled by admiralty courts.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 11, 1861.*

I went into town last evening to the wedding of Captain Griffin with Miss Carroll. I had another object in view, which was to avail myself of a capital opportunity of seeing in one place and at one time numerous friends. Kuhn and myself left camp about 5 o'clock, getting in about half-past 6. Kuhn found some nice rooms where his connections, the young Adamses, were staying, and where the landlady was gracious enough to admit us for the night. After tea and a stroll to Willards', we returned and beautified ourselves, and at 9 precisely repaired to the Carrolls'. Of course there was an immense jam; of course the bride and groom looked splendid, as did the fourteen bridesmaids and groomsmen, the latter all handsome young officers in full uniform. Mr., Mrs. and the Miss C's were very civil to your humble servant. I saw McClellan and had the honor of making way for him to approach the bride. I saw Mrs. Lincoln, Lord Lyons, Governor Chase, Mr. Seward, and lots of other celebrities. All my old Washington friends greeted me with great cordiality, and any amount of rooms and plates at table were offered to me when I should come into town, and all the ladies referred to your visit and their regret that you were gone before they could get to see you. There was the usual amount of flirtations carried on by the old stagers, assisted by numerous younger fry. I had a very agreeable evening; they had a magnificent supper, and at midnight Kuhn and I returned to our quarters.

This morning, having seen Master Charley Turnbull at the wedding (he not having yet received his return despatches), I went at half-past 8 o'clock to his house and breakfasted with them. Just as we had finished breakfast, and I was thinking of going to the Bureau to write you a few lines, a telegram was put into my hands, announcing the reported approach of the enemy. I hurried to the stable, got my horse, and in thirty minutes by my watch was here in camp, to find, as I expected, that it was a stampede.

There is a story, brought in by one of their deserters, a negro, that on last Friday, the day I was out on a foraging expedition, we approached so near an advanced command they had, consisting of a brigade of infantry and a battery, that they thought they were going to be attacked, and retreated in such a hurry that they abandoned their artillery, and did not return for it all the next day. Unfortunately, we were in ignorance of their presence, or of their stampede, or we might have had a glorious and bloodless capture. The

Southern papers have recently been vehemently urging an advance of their army in order to stop our expeditions by sea, and we know Jeff. Davis was at Centreville (where they are said to have sixty thousand men) last Friday. As he has adhered to the defensive policy, in opposition to his generals, it is not impossible he may have yielded, and determined to advance and give us battle. This may account for their movement last night and this morning. I think if they come out of their ratholes about Bull Run and give us a fair chance half-way, that McClellan will eagerly seize it, and the question may be settled by one grand battle. Were it not that I am determined to take things as they come and have no wishes, I would say, so let it be. The sooner this thing is settled the better, and it can only be settled by one side or the other gaining a most decisive and complete victory. I think, if we have a fair, open fight, our chances are good for a victory. But all battles are more or less the result of accidents, and no one can tell in advance what will be the result. We have been in readiness to move all day, but as nothing further has occurred, I suppose an immediate action for the present is postponed.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 12, 1861.*

We have nothing new in the army. Congress and its doings I suppose you see in the papers. It appears Cameron¹ has come out on the Abolition side, but honest old Abe² made him suppress the principal part of his report. I see Congress refused to pass a vote of censure on General Halleck³ for his order about slaves, which indicates the ultras are not yet to have it all their own way.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 21, 1861.*

It has been several days since I last wrote to you, owing to occupation, principally drilling my command and yesterday going on a foraging expedition.⁴ Of this last you are advised by this time through the public press, as what with the telegraph and the night train, it is actually a fact that at 11 A. M. to-day I read in the Phila-

¹ Simon Cameron, secretary of war of the United States.

² Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

³ Major-General Henry W. Halleck, U. S. A., in command of the Department of the Missouri.

⁴ Engagement, Dranesville, Va., December 20, 1861. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 68 (O. R.).

delphia papers of this date an authentic account of the affair, furnished by McCall, before I had an opportunity of getting information either from Ord¹ or McCall. I do not know whether you will be disappointed in not seeing my name in connection with the affair, but this is the fortune of war. Reynolds and myself were allowed to secure our plunder undisturbed, but after permitting two expeditions, the enemy made preparations to capture the third, which was Ord's. He left early in the morning with his brigade, and Reynolds followed to support him, and it was intended that I should remain in camp for the day. About 10 o'clock, however, McCall received information from Ord, who was advancing, that he had reason to believe the enemy were going to dispute his advance. McCall immediately went out to join him, leaving word with me to get my command under arms and be ready to move at a moment's notice. About 1 p. m., hearing heavy firing, without waiting for orders, I started with the brigade and reached the scene, distant eleven miles, by 4 o'clock, only to learn that it was all over, and that I might march back to camp, which we did, arriving here about half-past 8, pretty well tired out. It appears they had four regiments and a battery of artillery. Ord had a battery and five regiments. They had the choice of ground and opened the attack. Their artillery was miserably served and did us no damage. Ours, on the contrary, under Ord's directions, was very well served and did great execution—so much so that, after throwing them into confusion, our men charged, and they fled in all directions, leaving their dead and wounded and lots of baggage on the ground, giving us a complete and brilliant success. I have just seen General Ord, and I asked him how the men behaved. He replied, better than he expected, but not so well as they ought; that there was much shirking and running away on the part of both officers and men. Still, he persuaded two regiments to maintain their ground and finally to charge. These were the Kane Rifles (Charley Biddle's regiment) and the Ninth, a very good regiment commanded by a Colonel Jackson. One regiment he could do nothing with—(but this, as well as all that precedes, is *entre nous*). The fact that the enemy were routed, leaving killed, wounded, baggage, etc., on the ground, will always be held up to show how gallantly the volunteers can and did behave, and the world will never know that it was the judicious posting and serving of the battery by Ord (himself an artillery officer) which demoralized and threw into confusion

¹ Brigadier-General Edward O. C. Ord, commanding 3d Brg. Pa. Reserves.

the enemy, and prepared them to run the moment our people showed a bold front, which it required all Ord's efforts and some time to get them to do. Ord says if they had charged when he first ordered them, he would have captured the whole battery and lots of prisoners. You will see therefore that the result proves the justness of my prediction. Owing to the success of our artillery, the men were gotten up to the charging point. Had the artillery of the enemy been served as ours was, and committed the same devastation, he could not have kept his command together five minutes. In other words, it is success in the beginning of an action which keeps volunteers together, and disaster or being checked is sure to throw them into confusion or cause them to run.

Among the wounded was an officer, and from his person was taken a letter which was evidently written by a person of intelligence and position. It speaks of their fortifications at Centreville, says they are prepared for McClellan's attack, that whilst they know an attack from him would be a military *faux pas* and cannot but result disastrously, yet their hopes are based upon the knowledge of the pressure that is being brought to bear on him by the people of the North, who are ignorant of war and deluded with an overweening sense of their own power and a blind contempt for their enemy. This letter has been sent to McClellan. We have heard nothing from them since our return.

Sunday, December 22.

We have nothing new since the Dranesville affair, of which the papers will give you a full account. It is said McClellan is very much pleased, and McCall now expects to be reinstated in favor. I suppose, if I applied, I might get a forty-eight-hours' leave and spend a day with you; but what would be our feelings if during that time anything were to occur and my brigade be in action without me? The uncertainty of affairs, and the impossibility of foreseeing what is going to take place even twenty-four hours ahead, prevent me from making any application.

I wrote to you some days ago to distribute * * * among the children, which I hope they will receive in time to make their Christmas purchases. It is my wish that they should have everything done for them to promote healthy enjoyment, and that the season of childhood, the brightest of our existence, should be to them as happy as we can make it, knowing that sorrows, cares and anxieties will do

their work in time. Give them my blessing and my love. Perhaps it may be God's will I shall never see them again.

There is a tremendous pressure being brought to bear on McClellan, and there is no telling how long he can or will stand it. No one can predict the future for twenty-four hours, and all we can do is to endeavor to be ready for all contingencies. Good-by! God bless you all and give you a happy and as far as possible a merry Christmas!

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 25, 1861.*

I write a few lines on this day of rejoicing and festivity, to let you know I am well, and though absent from you in the body, that I am with you and my dear children in spirit and thought. As this day is the anniversary commemorating the great promise held out to all mankind, let us hope it may promise speedy peace and happiness to us in this world as well as the one to come. God grant it may be so!

I see you are greatly concerned about the foreign news. I doubt that there will be a war with England, because I think I see symptoms of backing out on the part of our Government, notwithstanding all their bluster, and this shows the impropriety of our making such boasts and bragging, passing votes of thanks to Captain Wilkes¹ for an act we may be forced to disavow. A war with England would be nothing less than self-destruction on our part, amounting to madness. Our only course is to yield to England's demands under protest, as to an acknowledged superior force, settle the rebellion, and then, when our hands are free, call on England for an apology or fight her. This course will not dishonor us, and will enable us to continue operations against the South unembarrassed by a foreign war.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 27, 1861.*

You have doubtless seen in the papers the enemy's account of the Dranesville fight. From their own showing they had a larger force than we, and chose their own position and time of attack, and yet were not only beaten, but most ignominiously driven off the field. It is without doubt one of the most brilliant and successful affairs of the war, and the only success that has been accomplished as yet by the Grand Army of the Potomac.

You are mistaken in calling Ord a civilian. He is a West Pointer,

¹ Captain Charles Wilkes, U. S. N., in command of the frigate *San Jacinto*, captured Mason and Slidell on board the British steamer *Trent*.

having graduated some four or five years after me, and has always been in the artillery, of which branch of the service he has always been considered a distinguished officer. Unfortunately for him, McCall's appearance on the field, just at the close of the affair, has given an opportunity to the latter to carry off the lion's share of the glory; but Ord was the man. I do not now remember what I wrote to you, but I should be sorry to do injustice to our men, and the fact is not to be disguised, that they behaved better than we expected.

The weather continues very boisterous and cold, rendering life in camp proportionately uncomfortable. I do not mind the cold, because exercise by day and plenty of blankets by night will remedy it; but the terrible wind, which penetrates and searches into everything, shaking your tent and making you believe each moment it is coming down, filling it with smoke from your chimney, so that half the time you cannot keep any fire—this is what renders us so uncomfortable. Still we get along and preserve our health wonderfully.

How strange it is and how little we can anticipate events! Do you remember when you accompanied me to Washington, about the 1st of September, that I was nervous for fear Washington might be attacked before you reached it—then, after being assigned to McCall, how nervous I was lest a battle should come off before I got my brigade? And now four months have elapsed without matters changing their aspect materially.

I infer from the tone of the public press that the war with England will be avoided, if concession on our part can keep it off, and that Mason and Slidell will be given up, and Wilkes's act disavowed, unless the ultras are too strong for Seward¹ and the President, or unless they see that England is determined to fight us and there is no use in trying to avoid the conflict.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 30, 1861.*

I intended yesterday (Sunday) to have written you a long letter, but just as I was getting ready to do so, orders came for a review by Governor Curtin. The review and attendant duties occupied pretty much the balance of the day. After the review, which passed off very well, Ord's, or the Third Brigade, was addressed by Governor Curtin, who eulogized their conduct at Dranesville, thanked them in the name of the people of Pennsylvania, and said he had directed the word Dranesville to be inscribed on the banner of each regiment

¹ William H. Seward, secretary of state of the United States.

in the brigade. Secretary Cameron, who was present, asked very kindly after you, and hoped you were quite well. Among Governor Curtin's *cortege* was Craig Biddle,¹ who seemed glad to see me, and said he had seen you only a few days ago in the street. General McClellan has issued a complimentary order, in which he returns his special thanks to General Ord and his brigade for the fight, and to McCall and the division for the prompt measures taken to repel the advance of reinforcements.

Well, the vexed Trent affair is settled, and just as I expected it would be. Seward's letter I do not like. It is specious and pettifogging. Had Mr. Seward written this letter immediately on receipt of the intelligence of the capture, and examination of the subject, then it would have been all right and honorable; but I do not understand the manliness of not finding out you are wrong until a demand is made for reparation, particularly as, anterior to that demand and its consequences, everything was done by Congress and the Navy Department, the press and all jurists, to insist on the justice and legality of the act. It is a clear case of backing out, with our tracks very badly covered up. I would have preferred insisting on the act being legal, but yielded on the broad ground of superior force and our inability at the present moment to resist the outrage. I think the course of England has been most disgraceful and unworthy of a great nation, and I feel confident that, if ever this domestic war of ours is settled, it will require but the slightest pretext to bring about a war with England.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *December 31, 1861.*

Do you know, to-day is our wedding-day and my birthday. Twenty-one years ago we pledged our faith to each other, and I doubt if any other couple live who, with all the ups and downs of life, have had more happiness with each other than you and I. I trust a merciful Providence will spare us both to celebrate yet many returns of the day, and that we shall see our children advancing in life prosperously and happily.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *January 2, 1862.*

I hear nothing of the movements against McClellan, because I am out of the way of politics entirely and do not often even see the

¹ Craig Biddle, of Philadelphia, afterward a judge of the court of common pleas.

papers. I think, though, the President is his firm friend, and that he will not be disturbed so long as moderate and conservative views have the upper hand. Still, something must be done. This condition of quiescence, with such enormous expenses, is ruining the country, and, one way or the other, the attempt will have to be made to come to a conclusion.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *January 5, 1862.*

I fully expected before to-day we would have received the orders that we had hints about, but as yet nothing has been received. Possibly McClellan's sickness may have postponed them, for it is now pretty well known that he has been, if he is not now, quite sick, with all the symptoms of typhoid fever. His employing a Homœopathic doctor has astonished all his friends, and very much shaken the opinion of many in his claimed extraordinary judgment.

The weather continues quite cold; we have had a little snow, but the ground is frozen hard and the roads in fine order. I have seen so much of war and its chances that I have learned to be satisfied with things as they are and to have no wishes. Were it not for this philosophy, a movement would be desirable, for I am satisfied this army is gaining nothing by inaction, and that volunteers, beyond a certain point, are not improvable. And as this war will never be terminated without fighting, I feel like one who has to undergo a severe operation, that the sooner it is over the better. An officer from town this evening says the report there is that McCall's Division is to join Burnside's expedition,¹ but I think this is a mere street rumor. They would not put an officer of McCall's years and service under so young a man as Burnside. I think, however, that if the Burnside destination is correctly guessed, viz., up the Potomac, that it is highly probable that simultaneous with his attack of the river batteries a movement of the whole of this army will be made on the Centreville lines, to prevent any detachment of their forces to reinforce the batteries and their guard. Should Burnside be successful and find a point where we could advance in their rear, then a large force will be sent in that direction, while the balance attack them in front. This is all surmise and is *entre nous*, but I have a notion it is McClellan's plan just now.

¹ Brigadier-General Ambrose E. Burnside, commanding expedition to Roanoke Island, N. C.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *January 16, 1862.*

Every one seems relieved at the change in the War Department,¹ though the secret cause is as yet unknown, some putting it on his political faith, others on his want of integrity, etc., etc.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *January 24, 1862.*

The mysterious movements of the Burnside expedition puzzle me very much. It has now been about ten days, and yet we have no reliable information of its whereabouts. The victory in Kentucky² was certainly very important in its results, and if the Confederate Army of the Potomac do not fight better than Zollicoffer's army, we ought to be victorious. For ten thousand men to run as they did, after losing only one hundred and fifty killed, is more disgraceful than the behavior of our troops at Bull Run. At Ball's Bluff, though we were overpowered by superior numbers, yet our men behaved with great gallantry.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *January 26, 1862.*

To-day being Sunday, I had an invitation from General McCall to dine with him, which I accepted, and had a very pleasant time discussing matters and things in general. McCall thinks France and England will recognize the Southern Confederacy and interfere in their behalf. I am not of this opinion, unless we should fail in the next six months to make any further progress in suppressing the revolution than we have as yet done. I cannot believe that eight millions of people, however great their spirit and individual gallantry may be, can hold at bay twenty millions, unless the latter are dastards and ignoramuses. If our men will fight, as men ought to do who pretend to be soldiers, and our resources are properly managed and directed, we must whip them so badly and distress them so much that they will be compelled to accept terms of peace dictated by us, provided we ask nothing of them but what we have a right to do, viz., to return to their allegiance under the old Constitution, and agree that the will of the majority shall govern. Here, however, is our great danger, and it lies in the effort that the ultras are making to give a character to the war which will forbid any hope of the

¹ Edwin M. Stanton succeeded Simon Cameron as secretary of war.

² Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky, January 19, 1862. The Federal troops under Brigadier-General George H. Thomas defeated the Confederate troops under General G. B. Crittenden, led by General F. K. Zollicoffer. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 194 (O. R.).

Southerners ever yielding as long as there is any power of resistance left in them. I still trust, however, in the good sense of the mass of the people to preserve us from a condition from which I fear it would take years to emerge.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 6, 1862.*

Day before yesterday, the weather being promising, and tired of the mud and *ennui* of camp, I mounted my horse and in company with Kuhn rode into town. After getting off the mud, we paid several visits which I had long been contemplating. In the evening, Kuhn went to see some Boston friends, and I passed the evening at Harry Prince's room, smoking and talking over old times and present troubles.

The next morning I started at 1 P. M. to Mrs. McClellan's. Here I found all Washington—citizen, foreign and strangers—among whom of course I saw many friends and acquaintances. Everybody asked after you, and wondered you did not come down and stay in Washington while the army was here, as if you could do as you please. Now for Mrs. McClellan. Her manners are delightful; full of life and vivacity, great affability, and very ready in conversation. She did not hear my name when presented, but while I was apologizing for not having earlier called to see her, she said, "General Meade, is it not?" I said "Yes." She said, "I knew it must be from the likeness, for I have your picture." I told her I felt very much complimented, etc., etc. During the three hours I spent there a constant succession of visitors came in and out to call, and to all of whom she had plenty to say in the easiest and most affable manner. I came away quite charmed with her esprit and vivacity.

I hear that the flag of truce which came in the other day brought the intelligence that the Confederate Government intended to hold the officers who were hostages for the privateers as hostages for the bridge burners that Halleck has sentenced to be hung in Missouri. If this is so, poor Willcox will be detained, if not sacrificed, as I do not well see how our Government can recede from punishing men who are not soldiers, but incendiaries, having no claim to the rights of prisoners of war, beyond the fact that the war incited them to do what they did.

I called at Mr. Stanton's in the evening, with a friend who knew him; but we were told at the door that his usual reception was postponed for Mrs. Lincoln's ball. I then accompanied this friend to a

liquor store kept by Mr. Fred. S. Cozzens, the author of the Sparrow-grass Papers and other well-known literary productions, who finds liquor selling more profitable than literature. Here I was introduced to Mr. Cozzens, a member of Congress and others, discussed a bottle of champagne and claret, and talked over the affairs of the day. The member, who was an Administration Democrat, said the ultras had been defeated some days ago, in a vote of censure that they had tried to pass on Halleck, and that there was in the House a clear majority for the President as against the ultras. Much anxiety in regard to foreign intervention and the lack of means was expressed. The Georgia address was considered a sign of desperation, and preparing the Southern mind for defeat. Altogether, the feeling is one of hope. I have told you the whole of my town spree.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 9, 1862.*

Is not the news from Tennessee glorious? ¹ It is very important in a strategical point of view, as it enables us to get in the rear of both Columbus and Bowling Green, and cut off the communication and supplies from these places, compelling their evacuation, which effected, we can attack them in the open field. Dranesville, Mill Spring, and Fort Henry prove most conclusively that they are not invincible, and will run just as soon, if not sooner, than we will. They have had a most beneficial effect on our *morale*, and I think all hands are now here looking forward to the period when we can do something.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 11, 1862.*

To-night we have the good news that Roanoke Island has been taken by the Burnside fleet, and while I write the camp is cheering all around me. There are no particulars, so that our cheers are unmingled with mourning. General Wise,² you know, was at Roanoke Island; so perhaps your good mother may have to rejoice over his capture, or mourn his death; let us hope as Christians the former may prove to be the case. Nothing has transpired in reference to Stone's arrest. I must believe he is the victim of political malice,

¹ The surrender of Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, February 6, 1862. The Federal troops under Brigadier-General U. S. Grant, and the gun-boats under Commodore A. H. Foote, defeated the Confederate troops under Brigadier-General Tilghman. The Confederates surrendered after the attack by the gun-boats and just as the Federal troops arrived.

² General Henry A. Wise, C. S. A., brother-in-law of Mrs. Meade, and Governor of Virginia, 1856-1860.

and that he will be vindicated from the charge of treachery and collusion with the enemy. You know I always told you his conduct at Ball's Bluff, in a military point of view, was open to criticism, and I always wondered McClellan did not order an investigation. The "Tribune" is becoming more violent and open in its attacks on McClellan and all regular officers. This is in the interest of Fremont, Jim Lane and others. All this I am glad to see; the more violent they become, the more open and bold, the sooner the question of putting them down or yielding to them will have to be settled, and until that question is settled, there is no peace practicable or possible. To-night's paper has a very important and good piece of news if true, viz: that Louis Napoleon in the address to his Chambers says, that so long as we respect the rights of neutrals France will not interfere.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 16, 1862.*

Sergeant¹ writes that your mother appears softened at Oby Wise's² death. I must confess if lives are to be sacrificed less sympathy should be shown for those who have plunged us into this difficulty, with their eyes open, and Oby Wise by his writings and conduct was as influential in bringing on the war as any one in his sphere could be. It appears he lost his life in attempting to escape in a boat. Had he surrendered when the day was lost, he would not have sacrificed his life. I think the rabid feeling you describe as existing against McClellan is confined to a certain party, and they are in the minority; though being very loud and noisy in their abuse, would seem to be formidable. I don't think they can succeed in their attempts to displace him. I am now very anxious to hear from Fort Donelson.³ A reverse there at the present moment would be very unfortunate; and I trust Halleck has arranged matters so as to render success in all human probability certain. The attack has, however, been in progress for four days, which is time enough for it to have fallen, provided it can be carried by assault. Perhaps to-morrow we shall hear something, but the absence of all news to-day is not favorable. We had quite a fall of snow yesterday, and neither the weather nor the roads indicate much prospect of our moving. Foolish people

¹ Son of General Meade.

² Son of Henry A. Wise.

³ Fort Donelson, twelve miles from Fort Henry, captured February 16, 1862. The Federal forces, under Brigadier-General U. S. Grant and Commodore A. H. Foote, defeated the Confederate troops under General J. B. Floyd. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 2,832 (O. R.).

consider the war over because we have had a few victories, but I consider it just begun. I believe, though, if we continue to be as fortunate as we have recently been, that it will not be long before the other side will have enough of it. There are many signs indicating that the people in the South are beginning to be tired, and if we can only inflict two or three really severe blows on them, breaking up their armies, I don't believe they will be able to gather them together again in any formidable numbers. Let us hope and pray for such a result and not mind the idle clamor of bad or foolish people.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 23, 1862.*

I did not go into town yesterday; there was an order requiring at least two generals to remain with each division. So that Reynolds and myself remained. I have not heard how the ceremonies came off, but the weather was unfavorable and the death at the White House had cast a gloom over the city.¹ For my part I consider the propriety of rejoicing somewhat questionable. In the first place, because we are not yet out of the woods, and, secondly, the character of the war is such, that though I undoubtedly desire success, yet I do not feel we can or should triumph and boast as we would over a foreign foe. If we ever expect to be reunited, we should remember this fact and deport ourselves more like the afflicted parent who is compelled to chastise his erring child, and who performs the duty with a sad heart. Some such feeling must have prevailed in Congress yesterday, for I see Mr. Crittenden's motion prevailed at the last moment, dispensing with the presentation of the flags captured.

I do not know what to make of our new Secretary. I do not like his letter to the "Tribune" and many of the speeches attributed to him. He appears to me by his cry of "Fight, fight—be whipped if you must, but fight on," as very much of the bull-in-a-china-shop order, and not creditable to his judgment. To fight is the duty and object of armies, undoubtedly, but a good general fights at the right time and place, and if he does not, he is pretty sure to be whipped and stay whipped. It is very easy to talk of fighting on after you are whipped; but I should like to know, if this is all, how wars are ever terminated? I fear the victories in the Southwest are going to be injurious to McClellan, by enabling his enemies to say, Why cannot you do in Virginia what has been done in Tennessee? They do not reflect that the operations in Tennessee are part of the operations

¹ Death of President Lincoln's son.

in Virginia, and that all will come in good time; but in their insane impatience to come to an end, they think, because we have been victorious once or twice, we are never to be defeated.

We sent out an expedition yesterday to reconnoitre and see if anything could be discovered of the enemy. They went some eight or ten miles and returned. The officer in command tells me to-day his men are entirely used up, and an ambulance, which is designed to carry three men with one horse, could hardly get along empty with three horses attached. You can imagine from this the character of the roads, and the practicability of a forward movement, and this has been the case ever since the 7th of last month, when the thaw commenced. I hear there is great opposition in the Senate to the confirmation of our friend "Baldy." I don't think they will succeed in rejecting him, but they have fought so hard that his friends on two occasions have thought it advisable to postpone taking a vote. I cannot ascertain whether I have passed or not, and am so indifferent that I have not taken the trouble to inquire of any one who might be able to inform me.¹ My name was published in a list of those said to have been confirmed, but it is now said that list was wrong. I don't know of any probable opposition, unless my friend Zach Chandler² should think proper to enlighten the Senate on his Detroit experience of my unreliability.³ I think Howard, though, would be an antidote to his bane.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., *February 25, 1862.*

I take it for granted from the tone of the public press and from the position McClellan is in, that he will move now as soon as he possibly can. His enemies, with skillful ingenuity, are trying to sow discord between him and Halleck, Grant and Buell, proclaiming that he claims all the credit of their victories. I am sorry to say I hear people talk this way who ought to know better, and from all I can learn McClellan's star is rapidly setting, and nothing but a victory will save him from ruin. It is well known his victories in Western Virginia last summer precipitated and caused Bull Run. Now the victories in Tennessee are forcing a movement here, with, I trust and believe, a better result than was attained last summer. I have but

¹ Nominated for brigadier-general U. S. Vols.

² Zachariah Chandler, senator from Michigan, and afterward a member of the congressional committee on the conduct of war.

³ General Meade's refusal to attend a mass meeting of the citizens of Detroit to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. See page 214.

little doubt of our success, and I think if we can overthrow the army they have in our front, that they will give it up, as I do not believe they can reorganize another large army. It is reported Cobb came to Fortress Monroe, the other day, ostensibly as a commissioner, with the returned prisoners; but as this is the first time they have thought it necessary to send a commissioner with the prisoners, and as Wool immediately despatched his aide, Colonel Tom Cram, to Washington, it is surmised that Cobb was bearer of some terms of compromise. I do not think, however, they are yet willing to accept the only terms we can grant—unconditional surrender and return to the *status quo ante bellum*. They have too large an army yet unconquered to justify their giving up without another cast of the die, which may be in their favor. I think, though, success on our part here will bring them to their senses, and I think we have every reason to believe, from our numbers, discipline and the *morale* produced by the recent victories, that we will be victorious. God grant that it may be so, and that I may survive to enjoy with you and my dear children the blessings of peace!

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., February 27, 1862.

We are all agog with orders received to be in readiness to move at short notice, and rumor has it that Banks above, and Hooker below, have both either crossed or are about crossing. I have no doubt we are on the eve of the long-expected operations, but the roads are not yet in a condition to justify our moving, and public impatience will have to be restrained for a little while. We receive very contradictory accounts from Manassas. Some say the force is very much reduced, whole regiments from the extreme South having gone home, refusing to re-enlist. Others say that no regiments have gone, but a great many soldiers have gone on furlough, after having re-enlisted. I presume the truth lies between the two. I expect we shall meet with vigorous opposition, but I trust our operations will be so conducted, both in the routes of approach and our numbers, that we shall be enabled to overcome and defeat them.

Yesterday I received my parchment as brigadier general, which shows I have been confirmed by the Senate.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., March 1, 1862.

Yesterday was a very disagreeable day, extremely cold, with a very high wind, and blustering weather. I was obliged to be exposed,

standing in the wind from 9 in the morning till 5 in the afternoon, mustering the several regiments of my brigade.

We are all in the dark as to where or in what direction we move. I surmise (this is *entre nous*) that a force will be crossed below Alexandria, while Banks threatens Winchester and we advance on Centreville. If either of these columns is successful and penetrate the lines of the enemy, the whole force, or at least a large portion of it, will be thrown into the opening. If we can once get in their rear, and compel them to leave their entrenchments, I think we will have a comparatively easy victory, and we have so large a force that I do not see any difficulty in effecting this operation.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., March 4, 1862.

I believe you get all the news in the papers before we do. The interdiction on the telegraph does not amount to much, as there has been literally nothing done except the passage of the Potomac by General Banks' column. Yesterday it stormed all day, raining and sleeting, as wintry weather as we have had this winter. I do not know what the plans and projects are, but I do know I would not move an army such weather and over such roads as we have at present.

CAMP PIERPONT, VA., March 9, 1862.

I am very much afraid there is a great deal of truth in what ——— told you, and that the President is at length yielding to the immense pressure that has been brought to bear to influence him to remove McClellan. McClellan, I understand, continues firm and undaunted. He says they may supersede him whenever they please, but so long as he is responsible, he intends to do what he thinks right, and not what others dictate.

This morning's paper announces the evacuation of Leesburg and its occupation by a part of Banks' force. I never expected they would attempt to hold either Winchester or Leesburg after we were ready to move in force.

I hear we are to be divided into four *corps d'armee*, to be commanded respectively by Sumner, McDowell, Heintzelman and Keyes. Into which of these commands McCall's Division will be incorporated is not yet decided. I don't think there is much choice between them. The selection of these men, by virtue of the seniority of their commissions, was, I understand, opposed by McClellan, who, finding he could not designate his commanders, objected to *corps d'armee*, and said he only wanted divisions and their commanders. He has been

overruled, and these officers selected in opposition to his openly-expressed views. All this is confidential, though it is a matter of absolute fact. Public opinion in this country is so wayward and so whimsical that I should not be surprised to see the same people who the other day called McClellan a demi-god, to-morrow applauding his removal.

CAMP AT HUNTER'S MILLS, VA., March 11, 1862.

I send you a few hasty lines to tell you where we are, and to relieve the anxiety which you will doubtless have from the reports in the papers. Yesterday at 11 A. M. we received orders to march. At 1 P. M. we got off, and marched fifteen miles, arriving at this point about 8 P. M. The whole army has advanced, and we are on the extreme right, distant about twelve miles from Centreville. We presumed when starting yesterday that we would have a brush in a day or two with the enemy. But this morning we hear that McDowell's Division, that advanced on Centreville, finding it was evacuated, and hearing that they had evacuated Manassas, continued on and is now in possession of their lately vaunted impregnable stronghold. Thus the prospects of another Bull Run battle are dissipated—unless they have, as the French say, only *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

We hear to-day of the disastrous naval conflict at Newport News.¹ This is a very bad business, and shows the superior enterprise of our enemies. There is no reason we should not have had the *Cumberland* iron-clad, as the *Merrimac* has been prepared by them. The loss of two such vessels as the *Cumberland* and the *Congress*, two of our finest frigates, is a very serious blow, not only to our material interests, but to our pride and naval forces.

I have not time to write you much beyond the fact that I am well. I have been in the saddle all day, posting troops and pickets, and making all the preparations to meet the enemy, though, from the reports in existence and believed, there is not much probability of his showing himself about here.

To Henrietta Meade:²

CAMP AT HUNTER'S MILLS, VA., March 13, 1862.

I think a great deal about you, and all the other dear children. I often picture to myself as I last saw you—yourself, Sarah and Willie

¹ Destruction of the gun-boats *Cumberland* and *Congress* by the Confederate iron-clad *Merrimac*.

² Daughter of General Meade.

lying in bed, crying, because I had to go way, and while I was scolding you for crying, I felt like crying myself. It is very hard to be kept away from you, because there is no man on earth that loves his children more dearly than I do, or whose happiness is more dependent on being with his family. Duty, however, requires me to be here, to do the little I can to defend our old flag, and whatever duty requires us to do, we should all, old and young, do cheerfully, however disagreeable it may be.

We came here, expecting to have a big fight with the Seceshers, but they have all cleared out, and I don't know what we shall do—whether we will go after them from here, or go back to Washington and take some other road.

I shall be very glad to hear from you again whenever you have time to write me another such nice letter.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP AT HUNTER'S MILLS, VA., *March 14, 1862.*

To-day we have orders to be ready to leave at a moment's notice and prepare to go by water. This confirms my anticipation. The railroad to Alexandria will be in running order to-day, and I presume we will take the cars for that place, and from thence go by boat to some point down the river, not improbably Old Point Comfort. It appears to me that Norfolk is the most important point now, and that its attempted reduction cannot be much longer delayed. Of course, all this is surmise on my part, and is, moreover, confidential. All we know is that we are going somewhere pretty soon, and that we are on the eve of decided and critical events.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *March 17, 1862.*

My last letter was written to you at Hunter's Mills, I think, on Friday, the 14th. On the evening of that day we received orders to come here, and started after dark in a pouring rain, marched six miles and bivouacked. The next day it poured all day, and the roads were in terrible condition, so that we were obliged to bivouac again and pass the night in a drenching rain. Yesterday it held up, and we marched to our present position, within two miles of Alexandria, where we are now bivouacked on the bleak hills, awaiting further orders. I do not think I have ever seen a much harder march than the one from Hunter's Mills to this place.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *March 18, 1862.*

I note all you write about McClellan. I fear it is all true, and that the most desperate efforts have been made and are still being made to take away his command and destroy him. Franklin told me that McClellan said to him, as they followed Lander's corpse, that he almost wished he was in the coffin instead of Lander. It is reported that they were about to introduce into the House of Representatives a vote of want of confidence in him, but were restrained by fearing it would not pass. It is said the President remains his friend.

McClellan is not the man to make himself popular with the masses. His manners are reserved and retiring. He was not popular either in Chicago or Cincinnati, when at the head of large railroad interests. He has never studied or practiced the art of pleasing, and indeed has not paid that attention to it which every man whose position is dependent on popular favor must pay, if he expects to retain his position. Now, you know long before the tide turned, I told you of ill-advised acts on his part, showing a disposition to gratify personal feelings, at the expense of his own interests. I have no doubt now that the enmity of Heintzelman, Sumner, McDowell and Keyes can all be traced to this very cause—his failure to conciliate them, and the injustice they consider his favoritism to others has been to them. So long as he had full swing, they were silent, but so soon as others had shaken the pedestal he stood on, they join in to lend their hands. Don't you remember as early as last September, ——— telling us how indignant Charles King was at the treatment of General Scott by McClellan, and that the General had said he would have arrested him for disrespect if he had dared to? In the selection of his staff he has not shown the judgment he might have done. There are too many men on it that are not worthy to be around a man with McClellan's reputation. Again, you know my opinion of his treatment of the Ball's Bluff affair, through personal regard for Stone. All these little things have combined, with his political foes, to shake his position. I think, however, it is pretty well settled that Old Abe has determined he will not cut his head off till he has had a chance, and as I wrote you before, all will depend now on the hazard of a die. Any disaster, never mind from what cause, will ruin him, and any success will reinstate him in public favor.

It is very hard to know what is going to be done, or what the enemy will do. My opinion is that they are concentrating all their

available forces around Richmond, and that they will make there a determined and desperate resistance. Of course, this defense will be made at first in advance, as far as they deem it prudent to go, or as they can readily retire from, as for instance, the Rappahannock on the north, Fredericksburg and the Potomac on the east, Yorktown and Norfolk on the southeast. Where McClellan will attack them is not known, but before many days are over it will be settled, and we will have a fight either at Fredericksburg, Yorktown or Norfolk. For my part, the sooner we meet them the better. The thing has to be done, and there is nothing gained by delay. The *morale* is on our side; our recent victories, their retreat from Manassas, all combine to inspirit us and demoralize them; and if our men only behave as we hope and believe they will, I think before long we shall have Richmond.

I rode over this morning and saw Willie.¹ I found on my arrival that there was in camp a party of ladies and gentlemen, consisting of Mr. Charles King, of New York, and his daughter, Mrs. Captain Ricketts, and her sister, who is married to a son of Charles King, a captain in the Twelfth (Willie's) Regiment. These ladies had come out to see Captain King, accompanied by Colonel Van Rensselaer, who you remember married a niece of Charles King. They had prepared a lunch, and all the officers were partaking of it, and having, as is usual, a merry time. Soon after I rode up, Miss King recognized Kuhn, who was with me, and sent Captain Wister,² of the regiment after him, and in a few minutes Colonel Van Rensselaer came up to me, and, after the usual salutations, politely asked me to permit him to present me to the party. Of course I had to say yes, and went up with him and joined the party. Mrs. Ricketts, you know, was a Miss Lawrence. I had known her mother and family all my life. She is now a great heroine. After doing the civil to the party I retired.

Friday, March 28, 1862.

I think I wrote you that on Tuesday we had a grand review of the whole of the First Army Corps. Yesterday we had another, for the benefit of Lord Lyons and some English officers, to which, although the generals of McCall's Division were invited to be present, the division did not appear. General McDowell's reason for its exclusion was that the ground was limited, and that he found it took too

¹ William Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade.

² Francis Wister, captain 12th U. S. Infantry.

much time to review three divisions, and therefore he only ordered two on the ground. Our fellows, though, are of the opinion that he did not consider them sufficiently presentable for his English friends; and some little feeling has been excited by his course, particularly as he has had the bad taste to come out to-day with an order extolling the troops for their yesterday's appearance, and announcing that the English officers pronounced them equal to any troops in the world. I was quite satisfied with the inspection of the appearance and movements of the men, that our Pennsylvania ragamuffins are fully equal to them, though in some few instances, like Phil Kearney's brigade (who had spent a mint of money on them), their uniforms were in rather better order. Our fellows console themselves with the reflection that the only troops in the First Army Corps that have beaten the enemy in a fair field, with equal numbers, are the Pennsylvania ragamuffins, whereas of the divisions deemed worthy to be presented to the Englishmen the greater portion were regiments who either did nothing or else behaved shamefully at Bull Run.

At the review yesterday McClellan appeared on the ground, and though he did not review the troops, yet he rode around after McDowell and his *cortege*. It would have done your heart good to have heard the shouts the men gave and the enthusiasm they exhibited when they saw him. I really believe he has the hearts of the soldiers with him.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *Monday Evening, March 31, 1862.*

To-day has been clear and quite spring-like. Reynolds and myself rode over to inspect some of the larger forts that have been erected in this neighborhood. The rumor now is that we are to get off on day after to-morrow, the whole of the First Corps (forty-five thousand men) together, and that we are to be landed at the same time, at some point where we may expect our landing to be resisted, or to encounter the enemy very soon after landing. For my part, I hope it will prove true, for this suspense and uncertainty is very disagreeable, and as we have to fight, the sooner we get at it and settle it the better. Nothing but the grossest mismanagement will prevent our success, for we have a really fine army and the troops in the best of spirits.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *April 2, 1862.*

Every one, soldiers and all, are impatient to be off and at work. We are anxious to see what we can do before the hot weather begins,

and are rather fearful that our Southern antagonists will be getting out of the way, to draw us farther south and delay us till the climate shall come to their aid. This, however, is not my view; I think we shall have plenty of fighting before we can secure Richmond.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *April 4, 1862.*

Everything here has been changed. Just as we were on the eve of embarking, orders came to proceed by land to Manassas and beyond. The meaning of this change of movement no one knows. Some say it is due to the fears of the President for Washington; others that it is a traverse McDowell is working to get away from McClellan and go it on his own hook. I believe both causes have conspired to bring it about; but whatever the cause, it is gross injustice to McClellan to interrupt and interfere with his plans without consulting him. He has gone down to Old Point in the firm belief and dependence that McDowell and his corps of forty thousand men would go where he wanted them to go, instead of which he suddenly hears, or will hear, that they have gone, under the orders of some one else, in an entirely different direction. How any man can be expected to carry on a campaign when such interferences and derangement of plans are perpetrated, surpasses my comprehension. Remember, all this is confidential; not a word to any one about it. Franklin was off at daylight and King this afternoon; we (McCall's Division) have not yet gotten our orders, but expect them momentarily. So far as going by land is concerned, I am quite satisfied with the change; but I do not like the apparent want of decision involved in the sudden changing of plans, and I fear, unless we have a head and one mind to plan, that the old adage of too many cooks, etc., will be verified.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *Sunday, April 6, 1862.*

In my last letter I told you of the change in our destination, and surmised the causes. Yesterday the orders appeared creating the Departments of the Shenandoah and Rappahannock, assigning Banks to the command of one and McDowell to the other. Thus McClellan, at a blow, is deprived of two army corps on which he relied to carry out his plans. It is said an urgent telegram was received from him for McDowell to go down, just as the order was issued taking McDowell's corps from him. Many believe and hope he will resign; I trust he will not commit such a fatal error. He has over one hundred

thousand men with him. This force, led by him and enthusiastic in his behalf, can accomplish much, and any success on his part will silence his enemies and reinstate him in favor.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *Tuesday, April 8, 1862.*

At length our orders have come; this division is to go to-morrow to Manassas by railroad. From thence our movements are uncertain, but I presume dependent on the success met in the attack McClellan is making by the York and James Rivers. The report to-day is that they are hard at work fighting near Yorktown; that McClellan is in the advance in the thickest of it. God grant he may be victorious and preserved, that he may outlive and put down his enemies!

We have had all day a terrible storm of snow and rain, one of the worst we have had this spring. Our men, however, have been getting tents from the abandoned camps in our vicinity, so that they are comparatively comfortable.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *April 9, 1862.*

I write a few lines to let you know I have not yet gone, though I expect to be off to-morrow. Reynolds's brigade left to-day, and though 11 o'clock was the hour fixed, yet they did not get off till after 4 P. M., being in the meantime exposed to one of the worst storms of snow and hail we have had this winter and spring. I do not know the cause of the delay, but I sincerely trust matters will be better arranged to-morrow, and we not so detained.

You have of course heard the glorious news from the West and Southwest.¹ It does seem as if Providence had decreed the South should be humiliated. Such a continued succession of victories without disaster is almost unparalleled, and seems to take from war its hitherto accepted character of being a game of chance. From Yorktown we hear nothing definite, except that our army has arrived before the enemy's works, which are found to be strong and formidable. McClellan has the means and the power to reduce them, and it is only a question of time. I have implicit confidence in his success. Rumor says the enemy has a considerable force between the waters of the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, which force will oppose the progress of McDowell's column; so that we are led to believe that a

¹ Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee, April 6 and 7, 1862. Federal troops under Major-General U. S. Grant defeated the Confederate troops under General Beauregard. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 13,047 (O. R.).

share of the glory yet awaits us. I do not believe, however, that they will make much opposition on this line after McClellan gets possession of Yorktown, for he will then threaten Richmond, the fall of which would completely cut off any force to the north on the Rappahannock, as Fremont in the Southwest and Banks in the Valley of the Shenandoah would cut off all means of escape. It does seem to me the people of the South are insane to continue the contest for the benefit of politicians and leaders, when it must be so evident to them that final success on their part is hopeless. All their calculations have failed, and there remains now but one desperate hope to them, and that is, that the enormous expenditures of the war will tire out the North; but this will prove equally false so long as we continue to gain brilliant victories, as the North will willingly spend money to acquire glory.

I suppose you remember General Mackall, just captured by Pope. He paid you a visit one evening with Dr. Simons when I was in Florida. He was a great friend of mine, a clever gentleman, who would have remained with us had the Government treated Southern officers with ordinary confidence and decency. Franklin is at Warrenton, the residence of Beckham's people; when I get to Manassas, I will inquire about them.

CAMP NEAR ALEXANDRIA, *April 10, 1862.*

Instead of going to-day by railroad, as was expected, we have orders now to march early to-morrow morning by the turnpike road to Manassas. This, therefore, is the last letter I shall write you from this camp. The bad storm we have had has ceased, and the weather looks favorable, so that the change from being cooped up in cars to marching is agreeable. I think the plan is for our column, some thirty thousand strong, to threaten Richmond from the north, and if McClellan should be delayed or checked in his approach by way of Yorktown, we will stand a good chance of having something to do. My experience, however, dictates that all calculations in war of this kind are vain. Often those who fancy they are the most remote from battle are the first in, and those who expect to do all the fighting are frequently the spectators of the deeds of others.

CAMP AT MANASSAS, *Sunday, April 13.*

My last letter was written to you from Alexandria, on the evening of the 10th instant. The next morning we started on our march to

this place, which we reached yesterday afternoon, passing through Centreville. On our arrival here we found Franklin's Division had been ordered back to McClellan. As this was a checkmate to McDowell, he has started off to Washington, and we now do not know what is going to be done with us. The withdrawal of Franklin reduces his army corps to two divisions of only twenty thousand men—hardly enough to attempt to threaten Richmond from this direction. I suppose he will try to get another division with which to cross the Rappahannock and advance on Richmond. If he does not succeed in this, I presume we will be kept here till the affair at Yorktown is decided, and if it should be in our favor, I think they will fall back from Richmond and probably abandon Virginia altogether. We cannot tell till McDowell gets back what our movements will be. This morning I rode over the whole of the Bull Run battle-field. A more beautiful ground for a battle never existed; country open, with rolling ground of gentle slopes, offering equal advantages to the attacking and attacked. I am now more satisfied than ever that we lost the day from gross mismanagement—a combination of bad generalship and bad behavior on the part of raw troops. This, however, is *entre nous*. Their works at Centreville and at this place are quite strong, and it would have given us a good deal of trouble to have driven them out, and it was a very good thing they evacuated them. I hope we shall be successful in driving them from Yorktown; though the last accounts would seem to indicate that they are pretty well prepared for us there, and that we have yet our hands full to drive them out. As I understand, the difficulty is that, owing to the fear of the *Merrimac*, the gunboats cannot leave Fortress Monroe to ascend the York River and take their batteries in the rear. It is said, however, the Navy have a plan, by which they are confident they will sink the *Merrimac*, if she gives them a fair chance, in which I trust they may succeed.

CAMP AT MANASSAS JUNCTION, April 16, 1862.

As to ourselves, we are *in statu quo*. McDowell has only two divisions, King's (his old one) and McCall's, and we are employed in the important duty of guarding the railroad from the Rappahannock to Washington. For what object this railroad is guarded beyond the necessity of supplying its own guard with provisions and forage, no one sees. It is evident we cannot advance on Richmond from the Rappahannock, because at that point the direct route leaves the rail-

road, and the roads across are impassable for artillery and wagons. It has been surmised that we are kept here because they are fearful the *Merrimac* may run the gauntlet at Fortress Monroe, in which case they could pen McClellan in on the peninsula, between the York and James Rivers, and then they could detach a force to threaten Washington. There may be something in this, but even granting its practicability, we would be as near Washington at Fredericksburg as at this place, and at the same time would more effectually threaten Richmond from that point. McDowell, I understand, is thoroughly disgusted with the turn affairs have taken, completely taking the wind out of his sails, and that he has sent an earnest appeal to his friends in Washington to have him retransferred to McClellan's army. Now that McClellan has got Franklin, I doubt if he cares to have McDowell any more with him.

It is a very pretty country around here, and the position occupied by the enemy was very strong. I don't believe they will soon again get another line as defensible as this one was, and their abandoning it was an evident sign of their weakness and inability to defend their other approaches to Richmond. As to the battle at Pittsburg Landing,¹ it would appear the plan of the rebels was admirably conceived, and would have been successful but for the presence of our gunboats. Finding they could not get to the river in consequence of these vessels, and that the success of their plan was impracticable, they very properly retired to their fortifications at Corinth. Hence, although they were checked and defeated in the object they had in view, yet it was not a triumphant victory on our side; for had the gunboats (against which they had no means of operating) not been present, they would have destroyed Grant the first day and Buell the second.

CAMP AT CATLETT'S STATION, *April 19, 1862.*

My last letter was written from Manassas Junction. Yesterday we broke up that camp and marched to this point, which is twelve miles farther on the railroad from Alexandria to Gordonsville. I do not know the object of our being moved here, except that we are nearer the Rappahannock and Fredericksburg. The railroad we are on crosses the Rappahannock about fifteen miles from here. At this point the enemy have destroyed the bridge, and it is said have a force of some ten thousand behind earthworks, on the other side, determined to prevent our rebuilding the bridge. Yesterday a brigade

¹ Same as battle at Shiloh.

under Abercrombie advanced to that point and exchanged artillery shots with the enemy, without injury to either side. Abercrombie is still there, and the railroad to that point is being repaired. When this is done, I suppose we will be pushed forward and the enemy dislodged from the other side, unless in the meantime it is determined to go from here to Fredericksburg, which is only twenty-eight miles from here. McDowell went yesterday to Washington, intending to go down to Acquia Creek, and sent from hence under Augur a brigade of infantry and two regiments of cavalry to Fredericksburg. At Falmouth, a place on the Rappahannock, some five miles from Fredericksburg, and where there was a bridge, our advance of cavalry was fired upon from an ambuscade and some twenty-two saddles emptied, Bayard (the colonel in command) having his horse shot under him, but he was not touched. Our men charged and drove the enemy (a Mississippi regiment) before them and over the bridge, which they set fire to in their retreat; but our people were in time to extinguish the fire and save a great portion of the structure. I have always believed they would resist our advance on Richmond, and have no doubt by the time we get across the Rappahannock, whether we cross at Fredericksburg or at the railroad crossing near here, that they will have assembled a force sufficiently large to give us all the glory we want in overcoming it.

Sunday, April 20, 1862.

You will already see by what I have written yesterday, that the prospect of our having work before us is quite good, in fact that two portions of our force—Abercrombie's brigade and Bayard's cavalry—have had a brush with the enemy, and from all I can learn, they are determined to dispute our passage of the Rappahannock and advance therefrom on Richmond.

I have my headquarters in a house in which a poor man with eight children is living. Some of these little ones are pretty and intelligent, and bring to mind my own dear little ones, from whom I am separated. I have ridden all about the country in this neighborhood, posting pickets and outguards. The country is very beautiful, but it makes one's heart sad to see the desolation and destruction produced by the war. Handsome farms abandoned by their owners, left to a few negroes, the houses gutted, furniture broken and scattered all over, fences burned up, and destruction everywhere. Sometimes I fancy the great object in sending McDowell this way,

is that the country may be laid waste, and the negroes all freed. Such certainly is the practical result of the movement, whether designed or not, and as there is no other apparent object, it is reasonable to infer this is the one designed. McDowell has not yet returned from his trip to Acquia Creek and Fredericksburg, and we shall have to await his return before our movements will be decided on.

CAMP AT CATLETT'S STATION, *Friday, April 25, 1862.*

Since I wrote, the whole of King's division has gone down to Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, and to-day orders were given for Reynolds to move down there with his brigade. I suppose I shall follow in a day or two, and that McDowell has at last got them in Washington to consent to let him concentrate his column at Fredericksburg, and either threaten Richmond from that point, or what would be better, interpose between Richmond and Yorktown, cutting off the communications of the army at the latter place. What I have been fearing, was that Banks would allow himself to be decoyed so far up the valley of the Shenandoah, that when they threw a superior force on him, we would be rushed across to his assistance. I see by the papers received to-day, that he has got as far as Harrisonburg, about twelve miles from Staunton; the latter being the point that Fremont is aiming at. If Banks and Fremont unite, they will be strong enough.

The papers say the *Merrimac* is ready to come out again; which I think is the best thing that can happen, as until the question of her supremacy is settled, we will be hampered at Yorktown. Let her be captured or sunk; when our gunboats will be free to operate on the James and York Rivers, taking the enemy's works in flank and rear, which now we cannot do for fear of the *Merrimac*.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *April 30, 1862.*

We arrived here yesterday afternoon, after a two-days' march from our last camp at Catlett's Station. We were very glad to receive our orders, because I began to fear we should be kept in the rear, repairing and guarding railroads. We had a pleasant march, over a pretty fair country, but pretty generally abandoned by its inhabitants, particularly the male portion. The last day (yesterday) we marched twenty-two miles, and our men came in good condition. Reynolds had preceded me, and Ord, I presume, will follow

in a day or two. We are now encamped on the bank of the Rappahannock, directly opposite the town of Fredericksburg. We are some twenty thousand strong, but as yet no one has crossed the river, except some flags of truce, holding intercourse with the municipal authorities. We have a pontoon train, and could throw a bridge over in a few hours, but it is rumored McDowell's orders are not to cross, for what reason is not known. To-be-sure, the railroad from Acquia Creek is not yet rebuilt to this place, and we have to haul our supplies some eight miles in wagons, and it may be that it is not deemed worth while to move forward until the road is repaired and we can communicate freely with our rear. We have received the news of the fall of New Orleans, which caused much rejoicing, and of the death of General Smith, which was received with deep regret by all those who knew him.

McDowell has his headquarters back at Acquia Creek Station. He was in camp to-day with Lord George Paulet, commander of the English forces at Montreal, and did me the honor to call at my quarters and introduce his lordship, which was not necessary, however, as I had met him in 1842 in Quebec, when I was there with Graham and Schroeder.

The people that are living around here are all pretty strongly tintured with "Secesh." The men are away, and the women are as rude as their fears will permit them to be.

Dr. Meredith Clymer has joined our division, with the expectation of being medical director, and being at Division Headquarters, but as he is junior to Stocker, the arrangement cannot very well be made, and I expect Stocker will go to McCall and Clymer come to me.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 5, 1862.*

I am very glad you saw Mrs. McClellan and were pleased with her. Although I don't think General McClellan thought much of me *after* I was appointed, yet I am quite sure my appointment was due to him, and almost entirely to him. At that time his will was omnipotent and he had only to ask and it was given. He told me himself that he had simply presented my name to the President, to which I replied that I considered that the same as appointing me; which I do, and for which I am not only grateful but proud, being prouder of such an appointment than if all the politicians in the country had backed me.

Since writing you, great events have taken place. Fort Macon

fallen, New Orleans taken, and now we hear Yorktown and the Peninsula are evacuated.

I believe our movement to this place has been magnified, and they saw the danger to their rear and got away before it was too late. I think I wrote you, when in Alexandria, that this was the place for us to come to, and never could understand what we were sent to Manassas for, except because the enemy had been there before us. Great efforts are being made to repair the railroad, so as to bring up supplies, and I think we will be pushed on as fast as the road is completed.

McClellan will push on from West Point, at the head of York River, from whence there is also a railroad. He has a shorter distance, only forty miles, and we have sixty, but he will have one hundred thousand men to move and we only forty thousand, so that we will progress about evenly. We don't know whether they intend to abandon Virginia entirely, or whether they have only withdrawn from the Peninsula, between the York and James Rivers, and have taken up a position nearer Richmond.

Day before yesterday General McDowell invited me to meet at his quarters the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, all of whom had come on a trip from Washington, and whom he very judiciously put into a wagon and drove them over the fifteen miles of road from Acquia Creek to this place, during which ride they were almost jolted to death and their lives endangered, owing to the dreadful condition of the road. He said to them: "Gentlemen, you can see for yourselves the character of the roads we have to draw our artillery and supplies over, and I assure you they are infinitely better now than they have been at any previous period of our operations since the frost began to leave the ground." I was introduced to all of them and they were quite civil. I did not recall to Mr. Chase's¹ recollection that I was a *ci-devant* pupil of his, not knowing how such reminiscences might be taken. After lunch we all crossed the river on a boat-bridge we have built, and took a turn through Fredericksburg. The place seemed deserted by all who could get away, there being but few white people, and they mostly old women and children. There are some very pretty residences in the town, though we only saw the outside of them. The papers will have informed you that Ord has been made a major general. They also state he is to have this division, but I think that is a mistake. The idea that

¹Secretary of the treasury.

McCall will voluntarily retire is absurd, and I don't see how with any show of justice they can put him aside.

CAMP NEAR FREDERICKSBURG, *May 10, 1862.*

The recent act of Congress in reference to command of troops is, I understand, construed by the Secretary of War into an entire destruction of rank in the army. It is now decided that the Secretary can put any officer wherever he pleases, over the heads of his seniors, and no one has the right, or will be permitted, to protest or contest this right. Ord has been made a major general for his Dranesville fight, and if McCall is superseded, I think it probable Ord will be given this division. I think the promotion of Ord just and deserved; for if I had had the good luck to have been in command at Dranesville, I should have claimed the benefit of it. War is a game of chance, and besides the chances of service, the accidents and luck of the field, in our army, an officer has to run the chances of having his political friends in power, or able to work for him. First we had Cameron, Scott (General), with Thomas (adjutant general) and McDowell, who ruled the roost, distributed appointments and favors. Bull Run put Scott's and McDowell's noses out of joint, and brought in McClellan. Then Stanton took Cameron's place, fell out with McClellan, whose nose was therefore put out of joint, and now McDowell again turns up, and so it goes on from one to another. A poor devil like myself, with little merit and no friends, has to stand aside and see others go ahead. Upon the whole, however, I have done pretty well, and ought not to complain.

Of course you have exulted over McClellan's successful dislodgment of the enemy at Yorktown and his brilliant pursuit of and defeat of them at Williamsburg. To-day we hear his gunboats have gone up the James River, and we now look forward to his beating them back from the Chickahominy and forcing them to fight, either at Richmond, or to abandon that place and Virginia. His progress has been so rapid that it seems useless for us to do any more work on the railroad on this line, and I look daily for orders for our column to take shipping at Acquia Creek and go down to West Point to reinforce McClellan. There is where we ought always to have been, and there is where we ought now to go. As it is, we are hard at work rebuilding the railroad to this point, and will have to do it all the way hence to Richmond, fifty-five miles. They have a force in our front some twelve miles off, and say they are going to fight us; but

McClellan's operations will stop all that, and they will be out of our way before we can get at them.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 14, 1862.*

Last Sunday the enemy, who have some force in our front on the other side of the river, advanced to our picket line, I suppose to see what we were doing. They were well received by a portion of General Patrick's brigade, stationed on the other side, and driven back, with the loss of one officer and twelve men. One of the generals in front of us is named Field, whom perhaps you may remember as being stationed at West Point. He was a large man and distinguished for sporting an immense shirt collar, *a la* Byron. He was married to quite a pretty little woman, whose sister, Miss Mason, was staying with them. This Miss Mason afterwards married Lieutenant Collins, of the Topogs. (your relative). Their mother, Mrs. Mason, is now at Fredericksburg, but her daughters are with their husbands, Field, a general in our front, and Collins, an Engineer, who has gone to Brazil. General Ricketts has joined, having been assigned to one of the brigades of the new division we are to have. He has a staff of Philadelphians—one of Julia Fisher's sons, John Williams, young Richards (son of Benj. W.) and I believe others. Colonel Lyles's¹ regiment is in his brigade, and I believe he has other Pennsylvania troops.

I hear the reaction in favor of McClellan since he has had some men killed is very great, and that even Greeley² has begun to praise him. Poor Mac, if he is in this strait, he is in a pretty bad way! Greeley's enmity he might stand, but his friendship will kill him. I am afraid Richmond will be taken before we get there.

I have not seen the death of Huger³ positively announced in the papers; all I have seen was that he was badly wounded. But he does not seem to have been made prisoner.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 19, 1862.*

I hardly know when I last wrote to you, though I know it has been several days longer than I intended; but I have recently been on a Court of Inquiry, and to-day my brigade was reviewed and

¹ Peter Lyles, colonel 90th Regt., Pa. Vols.

² Horace Greeley, editor New York *Tribune*.

³ Thomas B. Huger, brother-in-law of General Meade, in the Confederate army.

inspected by Inspector General Van Rensselaer; so that I have been so busy as to have been prevented from writing to you.

McDowell has been to Washington, but what has occurred is unknown. McCall is not to be disturbed, at least at present. Ord has been assigned to the new division of which Hartranft, Ricketts and Bayard are the brigadiers.

The cars are running to the river, and the bridge for the railroad is nearly completed. We now await the arrival of General Shields's division, when I suppose we will start for Richmond. We hear nothing of McClellan, beyond the fact that he has rested from pushing the enemy to the wall. Things are coming to a focus, both at Richmond and at Corinth. If we should be successful at both places, I think the South had better give it up, though there is no telling what they will do or what we will have to do. Subjugation is very easy to talk about, but not quite so easy to execute. All we can do is to be patient and await coming events.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 23, 1862.*

To-day we had a visit from the President and the Secretary of War, in anticipation of an immediate forward movement. This afternoon these gentlemen reviewed our division, and as the *cortege* passed my brigade, I joined it, and found among them my friend Mr. Mercier, the French Minister. I observed to him, in a joking way, that all Europe, as well as this country, were talking of his visit to Richmond. "Yes," he replied, "and both parties attaching an importance which it utterly wants, for it had no political object whatever." Previous to the review I had been at General McDowell's headquarters, and there saw the President. I took the liberty of saying to him that I believed the army was much gratified to see his recent proclamation in regard to Hunter's order. He expressed himself gratified for the good opinion of the army, and said: "I am trying to do my duty, but no one can imagine what influences are brought to bear on me." I believe the party returned to Washington this evening, having come down last night. General Shields, with his division, reached here yesterday, so that McDowell's corps of four divisions (about forty thousand) are all assembled, and we expect now to be off in a day or two to Richmond. Whether we will be too late and McClellan ahead of us, is not to be told. I rather think he will await our approach, as from all I can learn the enemy at present outnumber him, and our force will be a very welcome addition to his army. It is impossible

to tell whether we shall meet with any resistance before we get to the immediate vicinity of Richmond or not. They certainly have a force about fifteen miles from here, said to be twenty thousand strong; but whether they are designed only to watch us and to retreat before us, or whether they will be reinforced and give us battle at this place, are questions that time only can solve. I should think the former, inasmuch as it would be very dangerous for them to leave a force so far in front of Richmond, with McClellan so near, cutting off their retreat, and we pressing them in front. I therefore hardly expect much opposition till we get close to Richmond and in communication with McClellan, where I expect they will give us a big fight just outside the city and do their best to drive us away. If McClellan can see his way clear, and thinks he can get into Richmond without our co-operation, he will be greatly tempted to try it. At the last accounts he was only eight miles off, and could have a fight any hour he advanced. His troops were nearly all up, and he had almost completed the repairs to the railroad from West Point, by which he expected to draw his supplies.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 27, 1862.*

Yesterday General Reynolds's brigade was moved over the river to occupy the town of Fredericksburg, and we changed our camp to near the bridges, so that, in case of necessity, we could be rapidly thrown over. Although we only marched three or four miles, yet a thorough change of camp is always a great job, for notwithstanding we are prepared to move at any time, still we stick our stakes so firmly in the ground, when we do halt, that it is a labor to pull them up. McDowell left last night for Washington, where they appear to be paralyzed with fear at the audacity of the enemy falling on Banks with a superior force. It is whispered that McDowell was peremptorily ordered to return to Manassas and Alexandria, and to establish his headquarters at Washington City. He immediately took a train for Washington to enter his protest against such an injudicious move, and urge his being reinforced and authorized to move on. It was only the other day the Government disbanded two regiments of Indiana volunteers, who being twelve-months' men, their time had expired. These men were willing and desirous of re-enlisting for the war, but the Department refused to re-enlist, saying the Government had more men in service than it really needed. To-day they are crying out for any one to come to Washington to save them. The

truth is, we must expect disaster, so long as the armies are not under one master mind. In nothing is the old adage so fully verified as in matters military, "that too many cooks spoil the broth." The enemy by their razzia (as I think it is called) sometimes raid or foray against Banks, have most beautifully succeeded in knocking all McDowell's plans into a cocked hat, and now they are at leisure, so far as any co-operation from this army (for it was an army) is concerned, to do what they please against McClellan. I hope the latter will be able to drive them from Richmond, when perhaps the Government may for awhile be easy on the score of Washington. From all appearances, we will have to remain here, if not fall back to Manassas and Alexandria.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 30, 1862.*

It would appear from your letter that the Great Stampede, or, as it is called, the "Third Uprising of the North," had not reached 2037 Pine Street ¹ on the 25th instant, though it must have been in the city at the time. We, who are in the midst of the troubles and dangers, are greatly amused to see the terrible excitement produced in Philadelphia, New York and Boston by the inglorious retreat of Banks before a force but little larger than his own. McDowell has gone to Manassas, and has taken every one with him except our division, who have now the honor of holding Fredericksburg and the railroad from thence to Acquia Creek. Had not the enemy, in anticipation and fear of our advance, destroyed all the bridges on the rail and other roads between this point and a place some ten miles this side of Richmond, thus preventing their advance rapidly, as well as ours, I should look, now that we are reduced to one division (about ten thousand men), to their concentrating and coming down suddenly on us. This is their true game, from which they will perhaps be diverted by McDowell's movements, and their own work—placing obstructions to their rapid movements. At the latest accounts they had all retired from our front and gone back either to Richmond or Gordonsville. Still, they are much more enterprising than we are, and we are on the lookout all the time.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *May 31, 1862.*

Yesterday General McDowell (who has gone after the enemy who drove Banks back) telegraphed to General McCall to draw all his

¹ Home of General Meade's family.

troops over to this side, except such guards as were necessary to keep Fredericksburg quiet and to watch the roads leading into it, and be prepared to act on the defensive. To-day we had intelligence from contrabands that a force was collecting at Spottsylvania Court House, about twelve miles on the other side of the river; so McCall, to carry out his instructions and be prepared, ordered Reynolds's brigade back on this side of the river. This movement, somehow or other, was distorted and magnified, most probably by the telegraph operators, who keep up a chattering among themselves; for this evening McCall got a despatch from the President, inquiring by whose authority he was retreating from Fredericksburg; also one from Mr. Stanton, telling him the news of Shields's victory at Front Royal, and begging him not to let any discredit fall on his division. A person who was at Acquia Creek to-day said it was reported through the operators that the enemy had crossed above us, and that we were retreating in disorder. Of course this *canard* went up to Washington and was carried to the President. The truth is, we have been left here with too small a force (ten thousand men and thirty pieces of artillery); but McClellan at Richmond and McDowell in the Valley of the Shenandoah will keep all the troops they have busy, and they will hardly be able to bring a sufficiently large force to threaten us. We are, however, prepared for them; but at present all is quiet.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *June 1, 1862.*

Your letter of the 29th came to-day, and I should judge from its tenor that the stampede in Philadelphia this day (Sunday) week must have been pretty great. It does seem to me strange that sensible people can be so carried away by their fears as to lose all their reasoning powers. How could the enemy, even supposing their forces amounted to the exaggerated numbers stated—namely, thirty thousand—injure Washington, when Banks had ten thousand, there were twenty thousand in and around Washington, and we had here within a few hours' call forty thousand, to say nothing of the numbers that could be sent in a few hours from the Northern cities? As it is, the boldness and temerity of the enemy will probably result in their discomfiture, for McDowell is in their rear with thirty thousand men, and Banks, largely reinforced, is in their front, and it will be hard work to get themselves out of our clutches, if our people are as quick in their movements as they should be. Last night Mr. Assistant Secretary Scott made his appearance, to inquire into the *canard*

(telegraphed to Washington by the operators), that the enemy were advancing and we retreating. He stayed several hours with McCall, and among other things told him, "it was thought in Washington (that is, Mr. Stanton thought) that if McClellan would fight he would win. That his delay was exhausting and weakening his army, while the enemy were all the time being reinforced."

Do you see how handsomely Kearney speaks of Poe at Williamsburgh?

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *June 3, 1862.*

Everything is very quiet in this vicinity; all reports of the approach of the enemy seem to have subsided. The news of the attempt to break through McClellan's line is looked upon as favorable, inasmuch as the attacking party, having the selection of time and place, could and should have concentrated superior numbers; their failure to succeed proves either their weakness or our superior prowess.¹ I have no doubt McClellan has been most urgently demanding reinforcements, and that he looked with the greatest anxiety for McDowell's support. Indeed, his movement on Hanover Court House plainly indicated his expectation and desire to hasten the opening of communication with McDowell. I must do the latter the justice to say that he has all along seen the false position he was in, and has been most anxious to join McClellan, and was as much annoyed as any one when he was ordered to return to Banks's aid. The evacuation of Corinth is unintelligible to me, unless the approach of the gunboats towards Memphis and the destruction of the bridge on the Mobile and Corinth Road by Colonel Ellicott, proved to Beauregard that his communications were in danger and starvation threatened him.

I see an order just published, placing all the troops east of the Fredericksburg and Richmond Railroad, and those at Old Point, again under McClellan's command. This is a retrograde step in the right direction, and will enable him to control our movements and those of General Dix (who goes to Fortress Monroe), and make them harmonize with his own. If McDowell can only defeat and capture Jackson, and return here in time to advance on Richmond, Dix go up the James or Appomattox River and seize Petersburg, we will have them in a pretty tight place, and one victory in our favor would settle the campaign. As it is, scattered and divided, no one can tell what will happen or what combinations occur.

¹ Battle of Fair Oaks or Seven Pines, Va., May 31 to June 1, 1862.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *June 6, 1862.*

You will see that Jackson has escaped up the Valley of the Shenandoah, in spite of the various arrangements made to cut off his retreat. From all I can learn, the force sent from here under McDowell was not as rapid in its movements as it might have been. It ought to have pushed on from Front Royal to Strasburg, and not waited, as it would seem it did, till it had news that Jackson was falling back from Strasburg. We have had a continuous rain storm, part of the time very violent; the consequence has been the same here as with you in Pennsylvania—a great freshet in the Rappahannock, which carried away all the bridges we had built over the river, including the railroad bridge. To rebuild this will take some two weeks, during which time we shall be tied down here. When they were first carried away (day before yesterday) all communication was cut off with the town, in which were some six hundred of our people; but as we had intelligence that day that the force in our front had fallen back to Richmond, we did not feel much concerned about our men. Now we have a little steam tug that ferries across, and we will throw over a pontoon bridge as soon as the river subsides. I have been for several days on a court martial which occupies me from ten in the morning to five in the afternoon.

I am truly sorry to hear that John Markoe has been again wounded. Do you remember General Palmer? He is reported killed, but I hope it is a mistake. General Howard you must also remember, at West Point.

CAMP BELOW FREDERICKSBURG, *June 11, 1862.*

Day before yesterday, General McCall received orders for his division to join General McClellan, to go by water down the Rappahannock and up the York River to the White House. Soon after the arrival of the transports at a point on the river some six miles below Fredericksburg was announced to him, and he immediately sent Reynolds and myself, with our commands, down here to embark. Reynolds has gone with all his command, and nearly all of mine has gone. I should myself have been off, but just as I was preparing to leave, General McCall made his appearance with his staff, and took up all the room that was left, and compelled me to remain here with my staff, separated from my command, to await either additional transportation or the return of those that had gone. I cannot tell now when I shall get away. All the vessels that were

sent at first are gone; if others are being sent, I shall be off on the first that comes. But if it is not intended to send any more, and I have to await the return of those gone, it will be several days, perhaps a week, before I can rejoin my command. In the meantime, McClellan's pressure for troops may require him to send my brigade to the front, under the command of the next in rank. It is impossible for me to tell you how much I have been worried by this. Perhaps a vessel may come up some time to-day, and matters turn out better than I expect.

I think now it will not be long before our division will be in the presence of the enemy; being fresh troops, we will of course be sent to the front to relieve those who have been so long exposed. I understand very large reinforcements have been ordered to McClellan at last, in response to his urgent and repeated calls for them. It is rumored that the whole of McDowell's corps, except Shields (who remains with Banks), has been ordered, and some of the captains of the steamers recently here said that our twenty thousand men had reached him before they left, showing the Administration have at last come to their senses, brought thereto, doubtless, by a fear that a large part of Beauregard's army is coming from Corinth to Richmond.

I suppose you have noted in the papers that Colonel Kane has been made a prisoner, also Captain Taylor, of the same regiment, who is a very clever gentleman. I expected Kane, who has been thirsting for fame, would get himself in some such scrape, and therefore am not greatly surprised at its occurrence.

P. S.—*June 11, 5 P. M.*

I am glad to say several fine transports have arrived, and I expect to be off early to-morrow morning. As this has relieved me greatly, I have opened my letter to announce it.

CAMP AT RAILROAD CROSSING OF THE CHICKAHOMINY, *June 14, 1862.*

After writing my last letter, I was very busy employed in loading up the vessels with my train of wagons and ambulances. We got off in good time, and after a pleasant trip down the Rappahannock, we entered the York River and ascended it and the Pamunky to the celebrated White House, the estate of General Lee's son (Turnbull's old friend). We reached the White House this morning and found great excitement existing, from the fact that the enemy had the au-

dacity to show themselves along the line of the railroad, and finding two of our vessels in the Pamunky River, beyond the reach of any defense, they seized them, murdered the crews and burned them. This foray was accomplished, as far as I can ascertain, by some sixty or seventy mounted men, who made this bold and audacious move, having pretty certain information that being so far to the rear, we were perfectly secure and hence unguarded. The rascals were completely successful in every particular, except their attempt to capture my brigade train, which was on the road, guarded by a company of the Fourth Regiment. The company formed a line and prepared to receive the gentlemen, which caused them to hesitate and finally retire. What they did, however, made a great rumpus, and was terribly magnified by the time it reached our steamer, anchored some ten miles below the White House. As soon as I could find where my command was, I started off with my staff and escort, and the escort of General McCall, which he had left for me to bring on. I reached here about 3 P. M., and found the brigade encamped just before crossing the Chickahominy. Last night it was under orders to move forward, but the raid of the guerillas changed the programme, and Reynolds was ordered back with part of his brigade to guard the depot at the White House, and the railroad leading this way.

I have fortunately joined my command before they have been called into action, which I was a little nervous about. McClellan's headquarters are about four miles from here.

Kuhn saw Alexander Wilcox, who is here on the Sanitary Commission, and is on board a fine steamer, where, as we passed this morning, I saw numerous young ladies, in English hats, etc., very stylish, apparently having a nice time with several men. I was told this was the sanitary ship, and these were volunteer nurses. I thought at first it was a picnic.

It is all quiet in front at this hour, 6 P. M., but no one can tell when the ball may be opened by either side. I think in a day or two we shall go to the front, and then will commence the reality of war.

CAMP NEAR THE CHICKAHOMINY, *June 17, 1862.*

To-day we hear very heavy firing in the direction of Fort Darling on the James River, and we presume the gunboats are engaging the batteries on the river; though I understood from Commodore Dahl-

gren, whom I met at Fredericksburg, that the gunboats could not pass the obstructions in the river at Fort Darling, the enemy having pretty much destroyed the navigation, which it would take a long time to correct by removing the vessels and rocks, etc., which have been sunk and thrown in. I learned very little at headquarters yesterday. I think McClellan is awaiting the arrival of all his reinforcements, before pushing his lines any farther forward, or making any grand attack. In the meantime the enemy is busily at work fortifying all the approaches to the city, and without doubt will make a most vigorous and desperate resistance to our advance. McClellan, I understand, is in good spirits and confident of success, which I most sincerely trust he may attain. Our division remains where it was first posted, just behind the Chickahominy at the railroad crossing, where it is understood we will remain for a few days, as it is a good position for defending the railroad, and from whence we can readily be sent to reinforce any part of the line that may be suddenly attacked. From what I can gather, the taking of Richmond will be the work of time, by our slowly but gradually and surely advancing, until we get near enough to make a final assault. In this operation we shall, of course, have frequent skirmishes, and now and then big battles, like the recent one at Fair Oaks, or Seven Pines, as it is sometimes called, where they thought they had a fine chance to cut off our left wing, isolated from the rest of the army by the sudden rising of the Chickahominy. Unfortunately for their calculations, our bridges stood the freshet, and our communication was not cut off, enabling us to meet their attack and repulse it.

CAMP NEAR "NEW BRIDGE," *June 18, 1862.*

Late last night orders came for our division to march at early daylight this morning, which we did, arriving here about 11 A. M., and relieving Slocum's (formerly Franklin's) division, being thus posted on the extreme right flank of our army and in the front. The enemy are in plain view of our picket line, we holding here the left bank of the Chickahominy, and they the opposite one. There is quite a wide bottom and swamp between the two banks, but our respective pickets are within musket range of each other. But shots are not exchanged unless there is a collection on either side, looking like an advance or a working party. The "New Bridge," as it is called, you have doubtless seen mentioned and referred to in the newspapers. It is the bridge by which one of the main roads into

Richmond crosses the Chickahominy. We hold the approaches on this side, the enemy on the other. They are throwing up earthworks to prevent our crossing, and all the afternoon our batteries have been shelling their working parties, and they have been shelling our batteries, with I fancy no damage on either side. The "New Bridge" is only five miles from Richmond, and from the high grounds near our camp we can plainly discern the spires of the Sacred City. To-morrow Reynolds and Seymour go to Mechanicsville, which is a little higher up the river and about four and a half miles from the city. Immediately adjoining our camp we have Fitz-John Porter's corps, in which General Morell now commands a division. Stoneman's division of cavalry is also in our vicinity, as well as Sykes's brigade of regulars. Willie¹ has been with me all the afternoon. He looks very well—better than he did at Alexandria.

Did you see in the papers of the 12th the instructions of Joe Johnston to Stonewall Jackson? I hope you have, for they most singularly confirm my expressed views of the object of Jackson's raid. Johnston tells him that anything he can do, either to prevent reinforcements reaching McClellan or to withdraw any portion of his force, will be of inestimable service; suggests his attacking either McDowell or Banks—whichever he thinks most practicable—and says it is reported McDowell is about advancing on Richmond, which he, Johnston, thinks extremely probable. You see how completely Jackson succeeded in carrying out these, by paralyzing McDowell's force of forty thousand men, through the stupidity of the authorities at Washington becoming alarmed and sending McDowell on a wild-goose chase after a wily foe, who never intended to be caught in a trap, and was prepared to back out so soon as his plans proved successful. I must do McDowell the justice to say that he saw this himself, but no protest on his part could shake the strategy of the War Department.

We are so near the enemy that we hear their bands distinctly at tattoo and parade. On our side no drums, bugles or bands are allowed, except to announce the approach of the enemy. I can hardly tell you how I felt this afternoon, when the old familiar sound of the heavy firing commenced. I thought of you and the dear children—of how much more I have to make me cling to life than during the Mexican War; I thought, too, of how I was preserved then and since in many perilous times through God's mercy and will, and prayed

¹ William Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade.

He would continue His gracious protection to me, and in His own good time restore me to you, or if this was not His will, and it was decreed that I was to be summoned, that He would forgive me, for His Son's sake, the infinite number of sins I have all my life been committing. You see, I do not shut my eyes to the contingencies of the future, but I look upon them with a hopeful eye and a firm reliance on the mercy of my heavenly Father. It is now 10 o'clock at night, dark and rainy. All is quiet in both camps, and the immense hosts arrayed against each other are, doubtless, quietly and peacefully sleeping, unless some one with thoughts like those I have expressed has a disturbing conscience.

CAMP NEAR NEW BRIDGE, VA., *June 20, 1862.*

To-day we have had a little excitement. Our camp is on the edge of a small strip of woods that fringes the Valley of the Chickahominy. The enemy occupy the heights on the opposite side, where they are busily throwing up fortifications, to dispute our advance. Our people very foolishly, as I thought, undertook to interrupt their work by shelling their works. For a day or two they were quite quiet and let us have it all our own way, but this morning they opened on us with heavy guns at long range, and pretty soon gave us evidence that two could play at this game. Their fire was at first directed against our batteries, but my men, notwithstanding I had cautioned them to stay in camp and not expose themselves to the view of the enemy, would rush through the woods into the open ground beyond, to stare about like idiots. The enemy, seeing the crowd, soon ascertained our position, and moving one of their long-range guns, began throwing shot and shell right into our camp, scattering the curious gentlemen and giving them a pretty good scare. Fortunately no one was hurt, though the shell fell all around. I went in amongst them and remonstrated with them for their disobedience of orders, which had brought this on them, and after letting them stand the fire till they were pretty well subdued, I moved the camp to another position, and all has since been quiet.

CAMP NEAR NEW BRIDGE, VA., *June 22, 1862.*

I yesterday rode over to headquarters and saw McClellan. While with him Franklin and Baldy Smith came in, and I had a very pleasant visit. McClellan has been a little under the weather, but is now well and looks very well and is in good spirits. He talked very freely

of the way in which he had been treated, and said positively that had not McDowell's corps been withdrawn, he would long before now have been in Richmond. Last night we heard from a deserter that we were to be attacked to-day. We were all under arms before day-break, but everything has been quiet up to this moment, (9 A. M.).

I suppose you have heard of William Palmer's death. They seemed to be quite shocked at it at headquarters, as he had left only about a week ago, sick, but not considered dangerously so. Poor fellow! his death makes me a Major of Topogs.

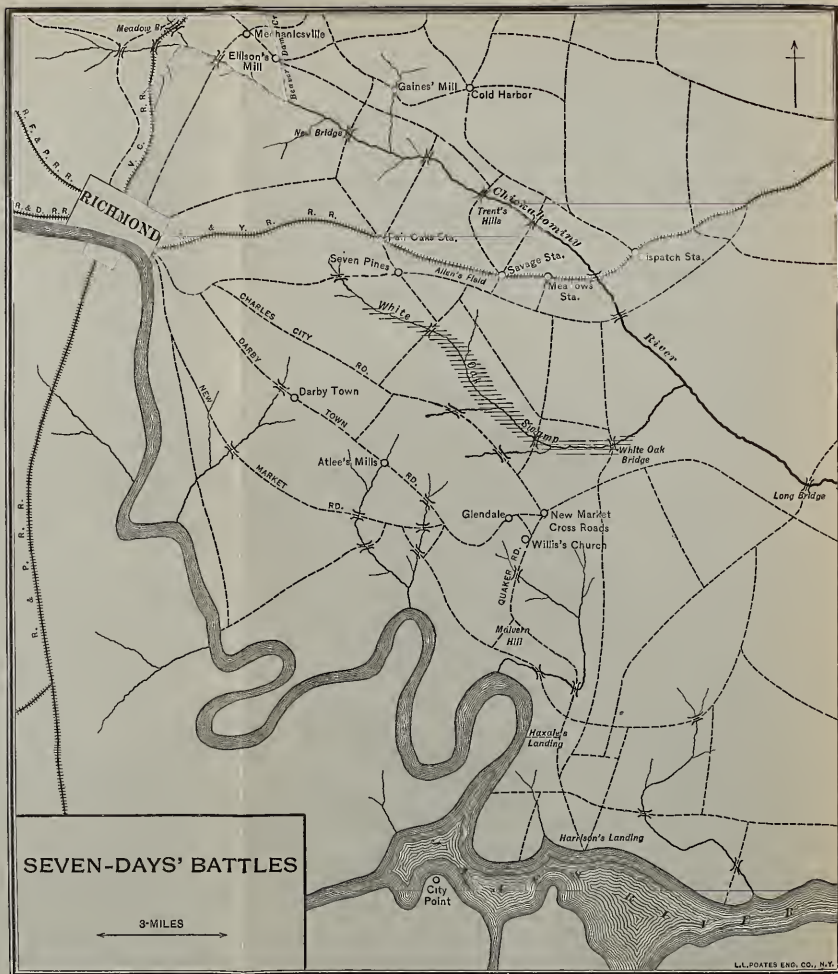
CAMP NEAR NEW BRIDGE, VA., *June 24, 1862.*

We have been in a pleasant state of excitement for the last twenty-four hours, under the impression that the enemy were disposed to attack our right flank in force, in which case the first onset would be received by our division. The result of this little expectation is our being under arms from before daylight (3 A. M.) till nightfall, and the almost total destruction of one's rest at night by constant and frequent orders, messages, etc., occurring from hour to hour. The trouble about the whole thing is that the men become wearied with these constant stampedes, as they are called, and it becomes more and more difficult to get them out at any prescribed time, they saying, "Oh, it's the old cry of wolf!" and I am really afraid we shall carry out the old fable, and when the wolf does come, be unprepared. I don't intend, however, that such shall be the case with my command, and am making myself very unpopular by insisting on the utmost vigilance and requiring all hands to be up and ready by daylight every morning, whether we have a stampede or not.

Last evening Reynolds made a reconnoissance of the enemy's position, driving in their pickets, stirring them up generally and making them display their force. I think he had two or three men wounded in the affair. This morning all seems quiet, though late last night it was the impression of the superior officers on our side that we should be attacked. To be sure, there was a very heavy fall of rain during the night, overflowing the Chickahominy Swamp, and most probably preventing any attack, had they designed making one.

CAMP NEAR NEW BRIDGE, VA., *June 26, 1862.*

Everything is quiet on our part of the line. Yesterday Heintzelman, on the left, made an advance, which of course was disputed,



resulting in brisk skirmishing, with some loss in killed and wounded on both sides. Heintzelman gained his point, however, and maintained it. We were under arms all day, ready to take part in a general action, if one should result. In the meantime, the batteries opposite to us have been throwing their shot and shell at us, but without inflicting any injury. There is a report that the great "Stonewall" Jackson with his army has left Gordonsville and is coming to Richmond, to turn our right flank. His withdrawal from the Valley of Virginia would indicate weakness of the army here, for he would never leave so important a field, and where he had been doing good service, unless it was a matter of great importance to strengthen their Richmond army. This report, in connection with the fact that they keep up a great drumming and bugling in front of us, to make us believe they are in great force, leads me to doubt whether their army is as strong as represented, and whether they do actually outnumber us, as some believe.

I yesterday rode to the extreme right of our lines, where our cavalry are stationed, watching the whole country, to apprise us of any advance. At one of the outposts, Reynolds, whom I was accompanying on a tour of inspection, sent for the officer in command of the detachment to give him some instructions, when I found he was our old neighbor, Benoni Lockwood, who seemed really glad to see me. The adjutant of the Fourth Pennsylvania Cavalry, now serving with our division, is your relative, Will Biddle. The health of the army, at least of our division, is very fair—some little bilious attacks and diarrhœa, but nothing serious. We have an abundance of good food; no army in the world was ever better supplied and cared for than ours is, all reports to the contrary notwithstanding.

* * * * *

This letter, which had hardly been mailed before "everything on our part of the line" became as *unquiet* as possible, was the last one written by General Meade until August 12, with the exception of a few lines on July 1 announcing his having been wounded the previous evening.

As this period includes what is known as the Seven Days' Battles, it becomes necessary, in default of General Meade's letters, to supply the break in the narrative by a general account, up to the time of his being wounded, of the operations preceding August 12 of the division to which he was attached. It is therefore not to be re-

garded as an account of the operations of the Army of the Potomac, except in so far as necessary to explain the part taken in them by the Pennsylvania Reserves.

About mid-day of the 26th of June the division of Pennsylvania Reserves, commanded by General George A. McCall, which was on the extreme right of the army, had its advanced pickets at Meadow Bridge driven in. It became evident that the enemy was about advancing in force, and preparations were at once made to receive him.

Toward three o'clock in the afternoon the enemy's columns appeared, and after driving back the small force of the Reserves stationed in advance, at the village of Mechanicsville, formed line of battle in front of the position occupied by the main body of McCall's division, which was on the left bank of Beaver Dam Creek, and shortly afterward the battle of Mechanicsville began. The Federal line was held by the brigades of Generals Reynolds and Seymour, with the several batteries attached to the division distributed along the front. General Seymour, who was on the left, his left resting on the Chickahominy, and covering the road by Ellison's Mills, resisted all the efforts of the enemy to carry this part of the position. General Reynolds, on the right of the line, also foiled every attempt to turn the position there, the success of the day being largely owing to his admirable disposition of his troops, and to his personal gallantry. The fighting fell entirely to these two brigades of the Pennsylvania Reserves, which not only repulsed but inflicted severe loss on the command of General A. P. Hill, with the whole of which, six brigades of his own division, and Ripley's brigade of General D. A. Hill's division, they were confronted.

General Meade's brigade was moved up early in the day from its camp near New Bridge, but did not become directly engaged, being held in reserve; but his services are referred to by General McCall "as worthy of credit for the promptness and zeal with which he carried out all orders sent to him." The brigades of Generals Griffin and Martindale of Morell's division were also, late in the day, brought up to within supporting distance, but, with the exception of two of Griffin's regiments, took no part in the action.

During the time that the fight lasted, from three o'clock in the afternoon until nine at night, the enemy made repeated, vigorous, and determined efforts to force a passage of the creek by turning, first the right, and later the left flank, in all of which he signally

failed, being repulsed with great slaughter. Owing to the admirable position of the Pennsylvania Reserves, their loss was very small.

The movement of General Jackson's column on the right flank of the army having made the position on Beaver Dam Creek untenable, at daylight, on the 27th, the division of Pennsylvania Reserves was, in obedience to orders, skilfully withdrawn to a position occupied by the remainder of its corps, the Fifth, near Gaines's Mill. Here, owing to its having been engaged with the enemy on the preceding day, it was ordered by General Fitz-John Porter to form a second line, some six hundred yards in rear of his main line of battle.

The battle of Gaines's Mill, which now followed, opened about two o'clock in the afternoon, by an attack on the centre of General Porter's position, and soon extended along the whole line. The assaults of the enemy becoming more and more persistent, and the engagement proportionately severe, about four o'clock the brigades of General McCall were ordered up to the front line, which was hard pressed, Generals Meade and Seymour being sent in on the left centre, and General Reynolds further toward the right. From this time forward the battle raged furiously and with varying success. General Meade's conduct was conspicuous as he led in succession the regiments of his command into the thickest of the fight at various points of the line where their services were most needed, in encouraging his men and rallying those who became disorganized.

On a call for reinforcements, later in the afternoon, General Slocum's division of Franklin's corps was crossed from the south side of the river and at once distributed along the line, relieving those regiments in the advance whose ammunition had been expended.

About dusk the Federal troops, thoroughly exhausted by the unequal struggle which for five hours they had gallantly maintained, were compelled to fall back, being borne down by the final and furious onslaught of the whole Confederate line, now reinforced by General Jackson's column, just arrived from the valley of the Shenandoah.

On the evening of the 25th June, General Jackson had arrived at Ashland Station, on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad. Leaving this point early the next morning, he had pushed forward, marching in a southeasterly direction, thus taking in rear all the positions of the Federal troops along the Chickahominy. Greatly delayed in this march, the evening of the 26th found him advanced only as far as Hundley's Corner, where he bivouacked for the night, and starting early on the 27th, he reached a point just

north of Cold Harbor. He there turned to the right, and having formed a junction with the forces operating directly under General Lee, moved down on the Federal position at Gaines's Mill, compelling the Federal troops to fall back to a position nearer the Chickahominy, when the opportune arrival of reinforcements, consisting of Meagher's and French's brigades, from the other side of the river, checked the enemy's further advance, restored order, and enabled the troops of General Porter to reform their lines, night putting an end to the fight.

The loss on both sides had been very heavy, the Pennsylvania Reserves especially suffering severely. One of General Meade's regiments, the Eleventh, together with the Second New Jersey, of Slocum's division, had continued gallantly fighting on the field, ignorant of the fact until too late that the rest of the line had retired; when, finding themselves entirely surrounded, they were compelled to surrender. On the right, in the confusion of the conflict, General Reynolds, having been cut off with part of his command, had, while endeavoring to make his way back, fallen into the hands of the enemy.

That night the whole right wing of the army retreated to the south side of the Chickahominy, and burning the bridges in their rear, occupied the heights commanding the river. The Pennsylvania Reserves, with the rest of the troops, took position on Trent's Hills, where they remained during the 28th, and at eight o'clock on the evening of that day were ordered to escort the reserve artillery of the army, consisting of fifteen batteries, to the crossing of White Oak Swamp Creek. Owing to the roads being crowded with troops and trains, the march was slow and tedious, rendered doubly disagreeable by the rain, which fell continuously throughout the night, and not until daybreak did they reach Savage's Station, wet, weary, and hungry. Halting but a short time, they pushed forward, and it was well on toward noon before they arrived at the crossing at the creek. On reaching the other side, where the artillery was deemed secure, the division, with other troops, was ordered by General McClellan into position on one of the numerous roads leading from Richmond, to repel any advance of the enemy from that direction.

On the morning of that day, the 29th, General Sumner had had an engagement with the enemy at Allen's Field, and later, Generals Sumner and Franklin had been engaged at Savage's Station.

The Pennsylvania Reserves remained in position until five o'clock

in the afternoon, guarding the approaches to the crossing of White Oak Swamp Creek, when, being relieved by other troops, crossing the creek, they were ordered to resume their line of march to the junction of the New Market and Quaker Roads. The accounts of this march are very confusing, and it is difficult to understand how this division, forming part of the Fifth Corps, with which it had marched that afternoon and certainly for a part of the night, was suffered to become separated from the corps, to wander off by itself, and eventually to be left behind. As far as can be gathered from the numerous conflicting accounts, it appears that after reaching the New Market or Long Bridge Road, the column turned to the right and marched in a westerly direction toward Richmond, passing beyond the junction of the Quaker Road, seeking for a road farther to the west, which it was informed led into the Quaker Road. The night was intensely dark and the guide evidently ignorant of the way. Finally, General Meade, whose brigade was in the advance, became convinced that they had passed the road they were in search of, and were being led in the wrong direction. Upon his reporting these facts, about midnight the division was halted, and the men lay on their arms alongside the road until daylight. In the meantime, the remainder of the Fifth Corps had found its way into the Quaker Road and by that to Malvern Hill.

In the early morning of the 30th the Pennsylvania Reserves retraced their steps on the New Market Road until they had reached a point just in advance of a by-road leading to the Quaker Road, and distant over half a mile from the junction of the Quaker Road and the New Market Road, where they received orders to halt.

Here it would be well to glance at the general disposition of the army on this day, if we would obtain a clear idea of the whole field of operations, and thereby of the relative position of the Pennsylvania Reserves to other bodies of troops, and its significance in the impending battle.

General McClellan's efforts throughout the retreat had been directed to the concentration of the army and trains at some secure point on the James River. He had succeeded by dark of the 29th in safely passing the whole of his artillery and wagon trains through White Oak Swamp, and between that time and five o'clock in the morning of the 30th all the troops were across, and the bridge over the creek had been destroyed.

In order to protect the immense and necessarily slow-moving

trains, General McClellan posted his troops somewhat in advance of the only road then known to lead from White Oak Swamp to the James River, as it was along this road that the trains were to move on the line of retreat. The line from the Swamp to the James being too extended to be held in force, it was only the most vulnerable points that he purposed occupying. Franklin, with Smith's division of his own corps, Richardson's division of Sumner's corps, and Naglee's brigade, occupied the position covering the crossing at White Oak Bridge. To him was intrusted the duty of defending the passage of the Swamp, and thus preventing the rest of the line from being taken in rear. Franklin's other division, that of Slocum, was posted on the right of the Charles City Road, covering that road, and its line extending to the marshy land bordering White Oak Swamp, thus also covering Franklin's left. Between the Charles City Road and the New Market Road was Kearney's division of Heintzelman's corps. On Kearney's left was McCall's division of Pennsylvania Reserves, extending across the New Market Road. General Hooker's, Heintzelman's other division, occupied a position to the left and rear of McCall. Although there was quite a large gap between the left of McCall and the right of Hooker's it was guarded only by General Sumner, with Sedgwick's division, which besides was posted to the rear of Hooker. The corps of Generals Keyes and Porter held the line nearer to the James River, the former being stationed at that point, and the latter around Malvern Hill. Their left and front were covered by the Federal gun-boats in the James.

It was evident at the time when the Pennsylvania Reserves had been ordered to halt on the New Market Road, just in advance of the by-road leading to the Quaker Road, that there was no anticipation on the part of those in command that the division was expected to be engaged during the day. They were momentarily expecting the order to follow the rest of the Fifth Corps. It was also the general impression in the division that it was far within the picket line of the army, and that after its constant fighting and marching on the preceding days, it was to be on this day at rest. Confirmatory of this view were the circumstances that the division was not placed in alignment, or any of the ordinary precautions in an exposed position taken, and this being the last day of the month, the several regiments were actually drawn up for muster. Yet the position in which the Pennsylvania Reserves now found themselves, about the

centre of what is known as Glendale, or the Glendale Farms, was to prove of greater importance than any other part of the line, owing to the intersection at that point of the New Market Road (one of the main thoroughfares from Richmond) with the road on which the wagon trains were moving. Failure to defend this point would have resulted in the destruction of the trains and the cutting of the army in two.

About nine o'clock in the morning, the enemy appeared opposite General Franklin's position, and opened a fierce artillery fire upon it, continued throughout the day, vigorously replied to by the Federal batteries. The enemy also made repeated efforts to cross the creek, but all of them were repulsed, General Franklin by night still maintaining his position, and thus, by having held in check the whole of the Confederate force under General Jackson, prevented the junction of the two wings of General Lee's army.

At the New Market Road all had been quiet until about noon, when reports began to come in of the approach of the enemy from the direction of Richmond. On receiving this intelligence, Generals Meade and Seymour rode out on the New Market Road for some distance, when they discovered that there was nothing except a squadron of cavalry between McCall's troops and the pickets of the enemy, who were reported close at hand. On their reporting these facts, two regiments of the Reserves, the First and Third, were ordered forward on the New Market Road, to form a picket line, and try and connect with that of the troops supposed to be toward the right and left. These regiments, deployed on both sides of the road, moved forward for some distance across the open country in front and well into the woods beyond; but before finding any line with which they could connect, their centre and left unexpectedly received the fire from a portion of what proved to be a large force of the enemy in front. Word was sent immediately to General McCall that the enemy was in strong force in front, and his skirmishers advancing, and the two regiments, after drawing the enemy's fire, were ordered to fall slowly back to their proper position in the line. In the meantime, General McCall, who had received orders that he was to hold this position at all hazards, had posted his troops in line of battle across the New Market Road, on the crest of a hill, and in advance of a piece of woods, with a stretch of some thousand yards of open country in his front, with woods beyond, through which the enemy was reported advancing. The division was formed with General Meade's

brigade on the right, his left resting on the New Market Road. With him was Battery "E," First U. S. Artillery, of six light twelve-pounders, commanded by Lieutenant A. N. Randol. The centre was held by two Pennsylvania batteries, Cooper's and Kern's, the former of six and the latter of four light twelve-pounders. General Reynolds's brigade, now commanded by Colonel Seneca G. Simmons, of the Fifth Pennsylvania Reserves, was in rear of the centre, in reserve. General Seymour's brigade was on the left, with two New York batteries, Diedrich's and Knieriem's, each of four twenty-pound Parrots, belonging to the Reserve Artillery, and temporarily serving with the division. The general direction of Seymour's line was perpendicular to that of the centre, which latter was at right angles to the New Market Road, whilst General Meade's line obliques from left to right, slightly to the rear. On General Meade's right was Captain Thompson's Battery "G," of the Second U. S. Artillery, of six light twelve-pounders, which was supported by Robinson's brigade. This was the left of Kearney's division, whose line was a prolongation of Meade's, with his right resting on the Charles City Road. General Hooker, as has been stated, was on the left and rear of McCall. His line was parallel to and half a mile in front of the Quaker Road; his right, Grover's brigade, resting on a by-road that came into the Quaker Road at Willis's Church. This distance between Hooker's right and McCall's left was about six hundred yards. Sedgwick's division was to the right and rear of Hooker, on and about the Quaker Road.

About two o'clock the enemy's skirmishers appeared on both sides of the New Market Road, rapidly advancing, followed by his columns of infantry. General Lee was present with this part of the army, and also President Davis, who had come from Richmond on purpose to witness the final blow that was to demolish the Army of the Potomac.

The position occupied by the Pennsylvania Reserves being somewhat in advance of the general line of the army, they were the first troops encountered by the enemy, who, deploying his columns, directed his efforts to driving back this division and gaining the road beyond. This force of the enemy was composed of the divisions of Generals Longstreet and A. P. Hill. Crossing the Chickahominy at New Bridge on the 29th of June, they had passed over to the Darbytown Road and bivouacked that night at Atlee's Mills. Starting out early on the 30th, they continued down the Darbytown Road and thence into the New Market Road. Soon after getting into the

latter, about noon, Jenkins' brigade of Longstreet's division, in the advance, reported the Federal skirmishers. These were the two regiments of McCall, sent out on the report of Generals Meade and Seymour. Longstreet continued to advance, pushing back these two regiments, at the same time sending Jenkins' brigade forward to reconnoitre the ground and the character and position of the force in front. On approaching the edge of the woods in front of McCall, the latter's whole line came into view. Longstreet then halted his column and formed line of battle across the New Market Road, in two lines, in the following order: In the front line Kemper's brigade was on the right, then Jenkins, Willcox, and Pryor successively toward the left. His second line was formed with Pickett's brigade on the right and Featherstone's on the left. A. P. Hill's division was to the rear, massed alongside of the road within supporting distance, except Branch's brigade, which was ordered forward to guard Longstreet's right flank. This formation of Longstreet's brought the centre of Jenkins' brigade on the New Market Road.

It was now about half-past two, when Longstreet, hearing artillery firing on his left, off toward the Charles City Road, and knowing that Huger's command was crossing in on that road and expected him to make a simultaneous attack, pushed forward his batteries and opened on McCall a severe artillery fire, which was promptly and effectively replied to by the latter's guns, the artillery duel being continued for an hour. Then, as he heard nothing more from Huger, and it was getting late in the day, Longstreet gave the order for his whole line to advance to the attack.

This column under General Huger had been directed to move down the Charles City Road to intercept the enemy in that direction. The movement appears to have been feebly made and resulted in little. They moved slowly down the road, skirmishing slightly, much impeded by the trees which had been felled in the road. It was late in the afternoon when their advance, Mahone's brigade, came on Slocum's division posted behind a swamp. An artillery duel took place which was, however, so effectively conducted on the part of Slocum that it checked all further efforts to advance, and darkness coming on, Huger fell back and bivouacked for the night.

There was great want of concert of action in these operations of Longstreet, which is attributed to the difficult character of the country. Kemper's brigade was the first to receive the order to advance

and the first to start, pushing ahead at a run, over fields and through woods, for about twelve hundred yards, when they burst out of the woods on the left flank of Seymour's brigade. Owing to the peculiar position of this part of McCall's line, the attack coming from this direction was rather unexpected, and the Twelfth Regiment, Seymour's left, the greater part of which was posted at a small house some distance in front, finding itself suddenly assailed in flank, and cut off from the main body of its brigade, was soon overpowered and driven off. Knieriem's battery, which was also on Seymour's left, after wildly firing one or two rounds, limbered up and went to the rear, leaving two of its guns in Kemper's hands. Seymour's left was now completely carried away. Kemper's success was very brief, however, as Seymour, although under heavy fire, swung back his right regiment, the Tenth, as also Diedrich's battery, and pouring a destructive fire into Kemper, succeeded in holding him in check. The First Rifles and the Second Regiment, sent by General McCall from the centre at the beginning of the firing on the left, now covered the left and rear of Seymour's new line and aided materially in preventing the further advance of the enemy in this direction. At this crisis the Fifth and Eighth Regiments were brought up from the Reserves, under Colonel Simmons, and these, with the rest of Seymour's line, made a gallant charge, drove Kemper back, regained the guns and ground in front, and followed the retreating enemy into the woods beyond, capturing several hundred prisoners. In this charge Colonel Simmons fell at the head of his regiments, mortally wounded. A large portion of the Twelfth Regiment, after falling back before Kemper, were rallied in rear of Seymour's new line, and joining one of Hooker's regiments, the Sixteenth Massachusetts, fought creditably side by side with it throughout the rest of the day.

General Meade early perceiving this advance of Kemper on the left, took one of his regiments and in person led it into the woods on his left front, to attack in flank. To do this he had to pass in front of the two German batteries with Seymour, which, notwithstanding his repeated and urgent demands, sent by his staff, to change the line of their fire, still continued it in his direction. This, combined with that of the enemy, threw his regiment into disorder, whereupon it retired and resumed its place in line.

It was now fully five o'clock, and Pickett's brigade, with Branch's brigade of A. P. Hill's division, was ordered to Kemper's relief. Moving rapidly forward and passing through the remnants of Kem-

per's troops, as they retired, the two brigades came on McCall's men in the woods. Met by these two fresh brigades, the regiments of McCall, scattered and disorganized by their impetuous charge, were now in turn, after a sharp fight, forced back. Branch, on the left, pushed ahead until he came out on the open field, where, coming under the heavy fire from the batteries on McCall's centre, he fell back to the edge of the woods and continued the fighting until the close of the engagement. Pickett, coming up on Branch's right, passing over the ground where Seymour's left had been, after a spirited fight, retook Knieriem's two guns, which the enemy had in turn lost, and directed them on the Federal line. Here a hot fight ensued, which resulted in Diedrich's battery being speedily silenced and driven off, and the forcing back of the Federal lines through the woods, until Pickett was met by the fire from Hooker's right, from Grover's two right regiments, the Sixteenth Massachusetts and the Twenty-sixth Pennsylvania, and also from Burns's brigade of Sedgwick's division, which had come up from the Quaker Road and occupied a position on Hooker's right. This concentrated fire prevented any further advance of Pickett in this direction, and he remained engaged here, combined with Branch, until the fighting ceased.

The repulse of Kemper's brigade had been so complete, and it had been so utterly disorganized and scattered, that it took no further part in the action, and was not fully collected together again until late that night.

Whilst these occurrences were taking place on the left, the batteries on the centre of McCall's line had been busily employed, either in replying to the enemy's batteries or in driving back bodies of the enemy as they came from under cover of the woods in front. About five o'clock, and at the same time that Pickett advanced, Jenkins' brigade had moved forward to the attack, passing under a heavy artillery fire through the woods in his front. His line of march brought him to the edge of the woods directly in front of McCall's centre, with his left on the New Market Road. He here halted his troops for alignment, and waited whilst a battery (Chapman's) was brought up. This battery, however, was hardly in position before it was knocked to pieces and compelled to withdraw. Jenkins then gave the order to charge directly upon Cooper's and Kern's guns. It happened that the First Regiment of the Reserves, now the only one remaining of the First Brigade, that had been in reserve, had been moved up close to Cooper's battery, just at the moment that

Jenkins' men dashed up. They came within twenty yards of the guns; a fierce encounter took place. But notwithstanding the violent and reckless assault of the enemy, he was gradually driven back across the open and into the woods from which he had charged, the loss very great on both sides, the ground strewn with dead and wounded.

During the progress of the struggle on his left General Meade had been actively engaged on his part of the line. The enemy had kept up a continuous infantry and artillery fire throughout the day, very trying to the men, with an occasional show of force, as if to charge. Lieutenant Randol, posted in front of the brigade, had been constantly employed driving back these advances. When Jenkins' men came out of the woods and started for Cooper's battery, Randol, whose front was at that moment clear, with the greatest coolness and skill, changed front to the left on his left piece, and pouring a destructive fire into this force of the enemy as it advanced against the left, materially assisted in breaking the attack.

Toward six o'clock in the afternoon the enemy came out from his cover on General Meade's right and front, and formed his columns for an assault, his objective point being Randol's battery. This was Wilcox's and Pryor's two brigades, which had been extending to their left, still expecting to come up with Huger, and were now, on the repulse of Jenkins, ordered to attack immediately in their front. They advanced in line of battle, Wilcox near the New Market Road, with Pryor on his left. They continued on in this way for some distance, but the country was so broken and rough, and the woods so dense, that their progress was much impeded. Pryor, who seems to have made the best progress, was forced to form his brigade in column of regiments, and pushing through the woods, came out in front of Randol and Thompson. Four times he advanced in solid columns of attack, and each time he was broken up and hurled backward by the murderous fire of cannister of the two batteries and by the musketry of the infantry supports. But at each repulse he would rally behind a newly advancing force, and charge up to within fifty yards of the batteries. Pryor's right, which was the first, as well as, from the nature of the ground, the most exposed part of his command, was terribly shattered and forced over to his left, which was partly protected by the woods. Featherstone's brigade, which was following in support, was now hurried up on the left to his relief. The two brigades were, however, unable to make any further ad-

vance, and they remained in the woods, and kept up a hot fire on Thompson's battery and Robinson's brigade of Kearney's division. Finally, Gregg's brigade, of A. P. Hill's division, was brought up to their assistance, relieving part of the line and covering the left flank. This part of the enemy's line, however, was held firmly in check by Kearney until the close of the battle.

Coming to Wilcox, who, after much delay, caused by contradictory orders, took up his advance along the New Market Road, the difficult nature of the country had caused him to form his regiments "by the right of companies to the front." On reaching the open ground, he found that two of his regiments, the Ninth and Tenth Alabama, were on the right of the New Market Road, and two, the Eighth and Eleventh Alabama, were on the left of the road. They kept on in this way, the regiments on the right being joined by some troops of Jenkins' brigade, which had been rallied after their ineffectual attempt to take Cooper's and Kern's guns.

Kern's battery had just retired, badly used up and having fired every round of its ammunition. Cooper's battery remained perforce, although in even worse condition, not only almost out of ammunition, but nearly all the horses killed, the limbers of some of the guns injured, and the battery altogether in a nearly useless condition, with two of its lieutenants dead among its guns. Coming within sight of this battery, Wilcox's men charged across the open field to capture it, receiving the fire of the First Regiment, which had reformed in rear of the battery, after driving Jenkins off. They, however, dashed on and reached the guns. Just at this moment the Ninth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserves appeared. This regiment, one of Seymour's brigade, had been posted on the left and rear of Cooper's battery, but on word being sent that a force of the enemy was coming in on their left and rear, had faced in that direction and moved a short distance in the woods to their left, when, not seeing or hearing anything of the threatened force, they were about returning to their former position. Together with the First Regiment, they now made a countercharge to retake Cooper's battery. A desperate hand-to-hand fight took place over the guns, in which the First and Ninth Reserves crossed bayonets with Wilcox's two regiments, and which ended in Wilcox's men being driven off, relinquishing the attempt on Cooper's guns. On the left of the road, Wilcox was temporarily more successful. After passing through the woods and coming out into the open field, his two regiments were

subjected to a severe fire. But although the one on the left, the Eighth Alabama, the one more exposed, first halted and then moved further to its left and joined the remnants of Pryor's and Featherstone's forces, and continued the fight there, the other regiment, the Eleventh Alabama, with muskets trailing and at a run, pushed straight for Randol's guns.

General Meade had now virtually but two regiments in his brigade, the Fourth and Seventh Pennsylvania Reserves. His other regiment, the Third, had been so actively employed all the first part of the day—first by its movement out in the New Market Road, and afterward by manœuvring and fighting in front of the line—that it had by this time become very much scattered, although detachments of it continued the fighting on different parts of the line. The two regiments that Meade still had were posted behind Randol's battery, the Fourth on his right and rear, and the Seventh on his rear and left. They had been subjected all day to an annoying artillery fire, and had been frequently called upon to assist in driving back bodies of the enemy as they appeared on their front, on all of which occasions they had lost a good many men. They had just seen what appeared to them one line after another of the enemy boldly charging up almost to the guns, and had helped in breaking up and driving them off. This was Pryor's assault in column of regiments. As the last line wavered and broke, the movement being then thought propitious, the regiment on the left, the Seventh, was ordered to charge the shattered ranks. Gallantly advancing, they had gone but a short distance beyond the battery, when they were met by the impetuous attack of Wilcox's Eleventh Alabama, which they were unable to withstand. They had been cautioned, in case of their charge proving unsuccessful, to retire by separating to the right and left, so as to unmask the battery and allow it to play upon the pursuing enemy. Unfortunately this caution was not heeded, and as the regiment retired, closely followed by the enemy, Randol was unable to open fire until too late to produce full effect, and the enemy, though raked through and through, pushed boldly on to within the battery. There the artillerists stood bravely to their posts, the officers using pistol and sword, and the men hand-spikes, sponge-staffs, or anything that they could lay their hands on. But resistance was unavailing; the force of the enemy crowded them off the field, and Randol, with one officer desperately wounded, and all his battery horses either killed or disabled, was, after fighting to the last possible

moment, forced to leave his guns in the enemy's hands. A force was now hastily collected, composed of the remaining men of the battery and some of the infantry, which made a last supreme effort to recapture the guns; but after a hand-to-hand fight, in which they succeeded in driving off the Eleventh Alabama, in regaining the battery, and rescuing Randol's wounded lieutenant, the enemy surging up in increasing numbers, this gallant little band was finally swept away. This was accomplished by part of Field's brigade, of A. P. Hill's division, which had been sent forward to Wilcox's relief.

A glance at the condition of the two contending lines at this point of time will explain the situation of affairs. The whole of Longstreet's division had now been engaged, and although temporarily successful on parts of the line, his attack had on the whole been so firmly resisted that it had failed in its main object—the breaking through of the Federal line and the gaining of the Quaker Road. His losses had been very severe; many of his brigades had been driven from the field, and those that remained were now, at dusk, so heavily pressed that the remaining brigades of A. P. Hill's division were being hurried up to support them and endeavor to regain the ground and batteries so often contended for. Along the Federal line, McCall's two flanks had been driven back and lost ground. His centre, however, still maintained itself, and with colors flying held its ground within a hundred yards of where it was originally posted, keeping watch over Cooper's guns, which neither side was able to use or remove. On McCall's right, Kearney had held his own all day. His left, which had been the only part of his line seriously engaged, was reinforced by part of Caldwell's brigade of Richardson's division, whilst Berry's brigade of Kearney's own division had also come to take position in its rear. On the left of the Pennsylvania Reserves, Hooker was to be found, still firmly posted. His right, Grover's brigade, on which had fallen the brunt of the fight, was now supported by Carr's brigade, which Hooker had posted in a second line. Both Kearney and Hooker held the same position they had taken up early in the day. Burns's brigade, which had been moved into the space between Hooker and McCall, occupying the ground where Seymour had reformed his line after Kemper's attack, had fought hard and well, and was now relieved by Sully's brigade of Sedgwick's division. This latter brigade, and Dana's of the same division, when the action began on Franklin's front, had been sent over there to be used in case of necessity. Late in the after-

noon they had been hurried back to their former position, and were now moved forward into action, Sully relieving Burns's regiments, and Dana, whose movements will be described later, moving to the right of Sully and more in rear of McCall's left centre. This was about the condition of affairs as A. P. Hill's brigades came into action. Two of the brigades of his division, Branch's and Gregg's, had been early in the day, as we have seen, sent to Longstreet's assistance. Of the remaining brigades, Archer's was now sent in on the right and moved to the left of Pickett's position, which was as far as it succeeded in advancing. Field's brigade moved directly down the New Market Road, followed on his right and rear by Pender's brigade. J. R. Anderson's brigade, the last one left of the division, was still held in reserve. Field, on starting out of the woods, came in sight of Cooper's and Randol's batteries. Cooper's, deserted, lay between the fires of the opposing lines and occupied by neither. Randol's was covered by what was left of Meade's brigade, which had just driven off the Eleventh Alabama. Field's brigade followed the same manœuvre as that previously executed by Wilcox. Two regiments, the Fifty-fifth and the Sixtieth Virginia, charged on the right upon Cooper's deserted guns, while the Forty-seventh and Second Virginia made a dash on the left at Randol's battery.

It was now getting dark and difficult to distinguish friend from foe, and in the woods, almost impossible to tell what was going on. On the right Field's regiments gained Cooper's guns without much difficulty, passed beyond them and entered the woods in rear, and going ahead for some distance farther, must have pushed out well to the Quaker Road. Finding themselves with no support on either flank, far beyond their lines, they fell back after a brisk fight to the place occupied by Cooper's guns. Here they met Pender's brigade, which during their absence had come up to Cooper's battery, just as one of Dana's regiments, the Twentieth Massachusetts, had taken possession of it. This regiment and the Seventh Michigan, by direction of General Sumner, had moved across the open field in rear of what had been General McCall's left, until they entered the woods on Cooper's left. They then moved by the right flank for a short distance, which brought them suddenly on Cooper's abandoned guns. This forward movement must have been made at the same time that Field's two regiments were moving in the opposite direction, the two bodies enshrouded in the darkness of the woods being wholly unaware of each other's proximity.

A sharp fight followed between these regiments and Pender's, the Seventh Michigan soon falling back and disappearing. The Twentieth Massachusetts, in danger of being flanked on the left, at the same time received so hot a fire on the right, undoubtedly from Field's men retiring, that its right wing had to be drawn back. It now found itself apparently alone, and under a heavy fire from both Field and Pender. It then withdrew to the edge of the woods just in rear, where they reformed their line; they were also joined here by the fragments of McCall's centre under command of Colonel Roberts. The engagement continued hotly, the enemy turning one or two of Cooper's guns on this small force. This regiment, the Twentieth Massachusetts, after it grew dark withdrew and rejoined its own division. Shortly after this Meagher's brigade suddenly appeared, sent to the assistance of this part of the field, and Colonel Roberts thus being formally relieved, moved off to the rear with the remnants of his regiments. Some sharp firing took place between Meagher's troops and the opposing enemy. The Federals, however, held their ground and soon after all firing ceased.

On the other side of the New Market Road, in front of Meade, Field's two regiments, the Forty-seventh and the Second Virginia, charging across the open field, reached Randol's guns, and after a severe fight, swept back the force of Meade that had retaken the battery from Wilcox. It was now dusk. Thompson's battery, on Kearney's left, swept the ground occupied by Field's two regiments, which, subjected also to a sharp musketry fire from the woods on their right and front, and having lost heavily in previous efforts, desisted from further attempt to advance and fell back under cover of the woods to the New Market Road. Unable to carry off the abandoned guns, they remained as they were on the field.

Thompson, who had been engaged all day and had done good service, at last found himself out of ammunition, with his battery much injured. At about half-past seven o'clock he received orders to withdraw, which movement was accomplished under cover of infantry fire, but not without the loss of one gun, the horses of which being shot, it was left on the field. Indications of a renewed advance of the enemy being apparent soon after Thompson's retirement, a section of the First Rhode Island Artillery, under Lieutenant Jastram, was brought up and occupied for a short time part of the ground which had been held by Thompson. It was, however, soon compelled to retire, also leaving one of its guns on the field.

The advance of the enemy, just described, which had been made by J. R. Anderson's brigade, the brunt of the fighting on the Federal side falling on Kearney's left and the troops that had been brought up to his assistance, was the final effort of the Confederates, and with its failure the firing ceased all along the line and the battle ended.

During the progress of this contest on the New Market Road part of the Fifth Corps, Sykes's division, covering the approaches to Malvern Hill, were also engaged and did good service. This force, assisted by the batteries of the Reserve Artillery, and by the fire of one of the gun-boats in the James River, effectually scattered a column of the enemy under General Holmes, which was forming on the River Road, with the intention of intercepting the trains, and drove them off in such confusion that they gave up any further attempt upon them.

Toward the close of the fight General McCall, leading a force of the Pennsylvania Reserves, with the view to securing Randol's guns, rode forward on the New Market Road to reconnoitre, when, in the obscurity of the night, he fell into the hands of the Forty-seventh Virginia, Colonel Mayo, of Field's brigade, who, having been unable to hold Randol's guns, had fallen back to the New Market Road. General McCall having been captured, General Meade having been wounded, and General Seymour having become separated by the dispersal of his brigade from the rest of the division, Colonel Roberts, of the First Pennsylvania Reserves, was informed that he, as senior officer, was in command of the division. Colonel Roberts, accordingly, took command of it, and with the assistance of the other field officers, was engaged in reforming it, when General Seymour appeared and took command.

At the end of the fight Berry's brigade had extended Kearney's left toward the New Market Road. On and about the road were the fragments of Meade's brigade, now commanded by Colonel Sickles, of the Third Regiment Pennsylvania Reserves. Burns's brigade was moving in this direction on the south of the road. Taylor's brigade of Slocum's division was formed in the rear across the road. Meagher's brigade, as we have seen, was occupying a position in the woods south of the road, to the rear of what had been McCall's centre. On Meagher's left Sully and others of Sedgwick's division were posted, while Hooker's position remained unchanged.

The enemy's line after the fighting ceased had retired back nearly to where they started from to make their attack in the morning.

General McClellan's object in defending this line had been accomplished. The enemy had completely failed in interfering with the movement of the trains, and had been severely repulsed at all points. By five o'clock in the afternoon of June 30 the last wagons of the supply trains of the Army of the Potomac had safely passed behind the previously selected position at Malvern Hill; during the night the troops, beginning with General Franklin's, had been withdrawn, and by daylight of July 1 were occupying the position where they fought on that day and gained a signal victory. The division of Pennsylvania Reserves, which had fought more and marched more than any other division in the Army of the Potomac, was on that day held in reserve and not engaged. On the final repulse of the enemy at Malvern Hill orders were issued for a further withdrawal of the army to Harrison's Landing. This movement was successfully accomplished during the 2d and 3d of July.

The total loss in General McClellan's army from June 26 to July 1, inclusive, was 15,249.¹ Of this number the Pennsylvania Reserves lost 3,074, far more than any other division of the army. Two hundred and fifty-three were killed, 1,240 wounded, and 1,581 missing. The division commander and one brigade commander were captured, another brigade commander killed, and a third wounded. Its list of casualties bears witness to its steadiness on the field throughout the whole campaign, and especially to the honorable part performed at New Market Cross-Roads, where it also captured several hundred prisoners and three stands of colors. General Meade, referring to this battle afterward, wrote to General McCall: "It was only the stubborn resistance offered by our division, prolonging the contest till after dark, and checking till that time the advance of the enemy, that enabled the concentration during the night of the whole army on the James River, *that saved it*." And General Fitz-John Porter also wrote: "Had not McCall held his place on New Market Road, that line of march of the army would have been cut by the enemy."

General Meade's services had been invaluable to General McCall. Mounted throughout the day, among or leading his men, cheering them by word and example, he seemed the leading spirit of the battle in that part of the field. He was frequently in and about Randol's battery, and was there when his regiment made the charge which ended so disastrously, striving to rally and inspirit his disorganized

¹ The Seven Days' Battles, June 26 to July 1, 1862.

ranks and restore his line, when he was struck in the arm and side by a musket-ball, his horse Blacky being wounded at the same time.

Here it was also, and about the same point of time, that Lieutenant Hamilton Kuhn, one of the general's aides-de-camp, is supposed to have been killed. The last seen of Lieutenant Kuhn was in the thick of the fight, ably seconding his chief in his efforts to rally his men to repel the enemy. He had been active throughout the campaign, performing the most important services. His courage, gentlemanly manners, and quick intelligence had much endeared him to the general, whose frequent mention of him in these letters bears witness to his high regard. Lieutenant Watmough, the other aide, was wounded, and in fact every officer attached to General Meade's staff was more or less hurt, all having served meritoriously throughout the day.

General Meade supposed at first that he had been struck in the side with merely a spent-ball, and that his arm, which pained him greatly, had received the more serious wound. It was then just about sunset. Riding up to Lieutenant Randol, he said: "Randol, I am badly wounded in the arm, and must leave the field. Fight your guns to the last, but save them if possible." He then rode a short distance to the rear, where he remained for some little time, giving instructions and reforming his troops. Finding, however, that he was becoming weak from pain and loss of blood, and as it was now dark and the fight virtually ended, he turned over the command of his brigade to Colonel Sickles, Third Regiment, and left the field.

General Meade, after leaving the field, rode to the rear, accompanied by an orderly, toward the field hospitals of the division. While on the way he met the division surgeon, Dr. Stocker, who, having received a painful wound in the hand, was riding in the same direction, and who, finding that the general was badly wounded and suffering intensely, accompanied him to the hospital. But it was soon evident that this was no place for any one to delay in, if he hoped eventually to follow the army. It was crowded with the wounded, the dead, and the dying. The surgeons, who were doing everything to relieve the wounded, had their hands full. Confusion reigned on all sides. Troops who had been fighting all day were beginning to fall back toward the river, and as it was impossible to furnish transportation for the wounded, those who were unable to drag themselves along would have to be left to the doom of a Southern prison.

General Meade had dismounted for the first time since being struck and was lying on the grass, when the urgency of attempting to remount and reach the river, or at least to pass beyond the new lines of the army, became apparent. Although suffering intensely, he had already risen, with but faint hope that he would be able to bear the jolting of his horse, when, as good fortune would have it, there appeared, hurrying along amidst the press in the road, the little, low, two-wheeled, one-horse wagon in which he carried his mess and tent. This was at once halted, everything tossed out, and the general lying down in it, and accompanied by Dr. Stocker, joined the crowd on its way to the river. Not confident that he would be able to proceed, he committed his sword and belt and his horse to his orderly, directing him to make the best of his way with them to the rear. Poking along through the weary hours of the night, over frightfully rough roads, every jolt and delay increasing his bodily and mental suffering, he finally found himself, long after midnight, at General McClellan's head-quarters at Haxall's Landing. There, through the kindness of General Seth Williams, who gave up his own tent for the purpose, he was placed on a bed to rest after his hard night's ride.

As it was the general's earnest desire that he should, if possible, be sent home, only sufficient examination of his wound was made to prove that such a course would not be injurious. Aware of the thousand rumors that would probably reach the ears of those who watched and waited through the long hours that followed a battle, he, ever thoughtful of others, and especially of them, insisted, although advised against any unnecessary exertion, upon writing the following note to his wife:

CITY POINT¹, HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, *July 1, 1862.*

DEAR MARGARET:

After four days' fighting, last evening, about 7 P. M., I received a wound in the arm and back.² Fortunately I met Dr. Stocker, and got hold of a little cart I had, in which I was brought here. Dr. Stocker says my wounds are not dangerous, though they require immediate and constant medical attendance. I am to leave in the

¹ This should be *opposite* City Point.

² The ball entered the side and came out at the back. In the hurried examination he probably heard, or was told, that he had been struck in the back. This seemed to worry him more than the fact of being wounded, for all through the watches of the long night he would revert to the thought, saying to Dr. Stocker, "Just think, doctor, of my being shot in the back!"

first boat for Old Point, and from thence home. Kuhn, I fear, is killed. Willie Watmough¹ was not hurt, the last I saw of him. Good-by!

Yours,

G. G. MEADE.

Although his wounds, as the general said, were pronounced not dangerous, yet many of those who came to bid him good-by believed them to be mortal, and that they were looking upon him for the last time. That night he was placed on one of the hospital transports bound for Fortress Monroe, and on reaching that place was transferred to one of the regular line of steamers to Baltimore, where he arrived on the morning of July 3, and was met by his wife and one of his sons, who had arrived there in the early morning. As his condition rendered it impossible for him to travel by rail to Philadelphia, one of the Ericsson steamers, plying between Baltimore and Philadelphia, through the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, and that afternoon about to leave for Philadelphia, was, through the courtesy of the officers of the line, brought alongside of the steamer from Fortress Monroe, and the general carried from one to the other.

The presence of his wife and the thought of at last getting home seemed almost from the first to revive him, and although very weak and still suffering, he passed a comparatively comfortable night, arriving safely at Philadelphia on the morning of July 4. He was there met by members of his family and several friends, and carefully carried to his own home, to which his family physician, Dr. Addinell Hewson, had been summoned to await his arrival.

The wound in the arm was through the fleshy part of the forearm, and might have been made by the same ball that struck the side; it proved of slight consequence and soon healed. The other wound was more severe. According to the account of Dr. Hewson, the ball had entered at an acute angle, from front backward, the right side of the chest, on a line drawn vertically from the armpit to the hip, and so impinged on the lower border of the ninth rib, from below upward, owing to which circumstance, its course being determined along the border of the rib as far back as the angle of the rib, it made its escape about an inch to the right of the spine, being thus prevented from passing in a direct line into the cavity of the chest and there wounding vital organs.

During the general's convalescence he remained very quietly at

¹ Lieutenant Watmough did, as previously stated, receive a wound.

home, enjoying the society of his family and his near personal friends. As soon, however, as he had become able to move readily about, he betrayed anxiety to return to his post. The reports from the front seemed to indicate immediate active operations, and fearing lest he should be absent from his command during some important movement, he, despite the counsels of his physician for a longer stay, on August 11 again bade good-by to his wife and children and set out for the field. He proceeded to Baltimore by the same route by which he had returned home, it being more convenient than rail for transporting his horses and baggage. These, left on the field of battle, had suddenly appeared one morning, much to the excitement of that quiet neighborhood, in front of the general's residence in Philadelphia, in charge of his zealous body-servant, who, hearing that the general had died of his wounds, had obtained the requisite pass and brought his two horses and private baggage as a memento to the family.

General Meade was absent from the field exactly forty-two days.

* * * * *

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

BARNUM'S, BALTIMORE, MD., August 12, 1862.

I arrived here this morning at seven o'clock. I was very well received here by all the people at this house, particularly by the office clerk in spectacles, who said he had seen and attended to you. He says ——— told them a piece of a shell had struck me in the body, passing through and through. It was not therefore unreasonable that people generally should have considered my case a desperate one. I had a very pleasant trip on the "Propellor," it being quite cool and breezy. At St. George's, on the canal, just as I had turned in, I was informed that a number of Union citizens had assembled on the dock and were desirous of seeing me, as they had seen me pass through when wounded. Fortunately the boat was about starting, which, together with my dishabille, were given as excuses for my non-appearance, and the people of St. George's were thus saved a most eloquent address. The first person I saw this morning was Duncan Graham, looking very handsome and very like his brother Willie. Duncan is on board the "Octorara," Commodore Porter's flagship. After I had breakfasted, I attended to shifting the baggage and securing my place on the Old Point boat.

I cannot tell you how miserable and sad I was and am at parting from you and the dear children, and as the boat pushed off and I saw those three fine boys standing on the dock, I thought my heart would break. But it cannot be helped and must be endured, and we must try and bear our trials as cheerfully as we possibly can.

BALTIMORE, *August 16, 1862.*

I left Baltimore on Wednesday afternoon with a great crowd of returning officers and soldiers. I think I wrote you that it was reported in Baltimore that the Government had taken possession of every available means of transport. When I got on the boat, I met Colonel Falls, the proprietor of the line, who was so civil to me when wounded, who told me confidentially that the army was to be withdrawn from the James River, and that he was expecting Mr. Tucker, Assistant Secretary of War, to go with him to arrange about the movement. On my arrival at Fortress Monroe, General Dix said something was going on, but was too diplomatic, or did not know enough, to give me any useful information. I therefore continued on to Harrison's Landing, arriving at nine o'clock Thursday evening. I found the troops of our division were then embarking. On repairing to headquarters, I met General Seth Williams and General Porter. They informed me that McCall and Reynolds had been released and returned; that McCall had been ordered to Washington, and Reynolds assigned to the command of the division. It was so late, being near eleven o'clock, and having borrowed an ambulance from a friendly quartermaster to take me up there, I did not make an effort to see McClellan, but returned to the boat, where I slept. The next morning, after much trouble, I found Reynolds, who received me very warmly. He said he had not yet assumed command of the division, and would not do so till it reached the end of the movement by water (Acquia Creek), and that the best thing I could do would be to rejoin it there; that I would have the First Brigade, Seymour the Second, and Jackson the Third. I immediately returned in the mail-boat, reached Old Point last night, and this place this morning, and would have been in Washington by this time but for the failure of my baggage to get up to the train in time. I shall go to Washington this afternoon, and if there is a boat leaving to-morrow (Sunday), go down in it to Acquia Creek. I see the papers have got hold of the movement; still you must not repeat what I write. McClellan's army is to be withdrawn entirely from the James and be posted at

Fredericksburg and in front of Washington. This is a virtual condemnation of all McClellan's movements, and must be a most bitter pill for him to swallow. When at Fortress Monroe, I understood he had come down the night before and telegraphed to the Department and returned apparently disgusted. It was believed he earnestly protested against the withdrawal, and asked for authority to advance on Richmond. It was peremptorily refused him.

I have been informed that Burnside has been twice urged to take the command of the Army of the Potomac, but always refuses to supersede McClellan; but I believe the thing will soon be done without consulting either of them, for the more I see the more I am satisfied that McClellan is irretrievably gone, and has lost the greatest chance any man ever had on this continent.

Reynolds looks very well, but complains bitterly of the want of courtesy shown towards him in Richmond.

FREDERICKSBURG,¹ *August 18, 1862.*

I enclose you an order recently published by McClellan, which I wish you to show Dr. Hewson, as it will confirm what I told him, that the Army of the Potomac had always carried out the *new policy* in a proper manner, and that the President's order and Pope's manifestoes were unnecessary.

Sunday morning at eight o'clock I left in the boat for this place, arriving here in the evening. I find myself ahead of Reynolds and Seymour. Burnside is absent, and Parke, recently made major general, is in command. To-day I have been very busy, seeing Parke and getting myself fixed. I visited my old regiments and was received with much enthusiasm, and I really believe the whole command, officers and men, were sincerely glad to see me back.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *August 19, 1862.*

My yesterday's letter announced to you my arrival at this place and my being once more in harness. I have not yet assumed command of my old brigade, as I am awaiting the arrival of Reynolds, who ought to have reached here, and whom I am hourly expecting. I, however, yesterday went amongst them, riding through the camps, and was much gratified at their turning out by companies and cheering me. I stopped at each company and said a few words, indicating my gratification at being once more among them, and commending

¹ Should be *opposite* Fredericksburg.

them for their good conduct in battle. They all seemed right glad to see me, both officers and men, and I do believe they were sincere. This is very gratifying, for they had more opportunity of knowing what I did and what I am than my superior officers.

Burnside returned this morning and received me very cordially. He is quite different from McClellan in his manners, having great affability and a winning way with him that attracts instead of repelling strangers. I have accidentally learned the cause of his absence, which I communicate confidentially. It appears when McClellan telegraphed, asking to have the retreat countermanded and an advance ordered, that very sharp messages passed between him and Halleck. The latter individual immediately sent for Burnside, stated the case to him, said McClellan misunderstood his feelings and position, which were of the most friendly nature towards him, but that the matter had taken such shape that unless he (Burnside) could get McClellan to recede or explain, that he (Halleck) could not save him from being superseded. Burnside immediately went down to the James River, and was returning when I saw him this morning, having, as he thinks, adjusted the difficulty. Burnside is devotedly attached to McClellan, and would not think of taking his place when it was offered to him. Burnside says the rear guard had crossed the Chickahominy before he left, and that the retreat had been conducted in the most masterly manner, the enemy either not knowing it or else glad to let us go undisturbed. We hear nothing of the enemy in our vicinity, and they are said to be falling back from Pope. What they are after now, it is hard to tell. Since I have been here I have been talking over the battles with different officers, and I am coming to the conclusion that the Pennsylvania Reserves did save the army, in the great strategic change of base; that is to say, had it not been for the Reserves holding the enemy in check on Monday, June 30th, and thus enabling the different corps to retreat and *unite* on that night, they (the enemy) would undoubtedly have broken our centre and divided our forces in two, which could have been destroyed in detail. Hence the sturdy resistance made by the Reserves, not permitting the enemy to advance beyond the line of battle, gave our forces time during the night to retire and concentrate, so that next morning the enemy found an unbroken line in front of them. From all I can learn, those that did fight, fought most gallantly and desperately. Of course, there were a great many (as there always will be) who left the ranks early in the action.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *August 21, 1862.*

Generals Reynolds and Seymour arrived yesterday afternoon, and to-day the division is to be reorganized, Reynolds taking the command of the whole, I of the First Brigade, Seymour the Second, and General Jackson (recently appointed from the colonelcy of the Ninth Regiment) the Third.

We have very exciting news to-day. It appears that General Pope has been obliged to show *his back* to the enemy and to select a *line of retreat*, as Jackson, having advanced with a large force, General Pope has been compelled to retire from the line of the Rapidan and across the Rappahannock.¹ I expect that in a few days we will have exciting times, and expect hourly orders for us either to hurry up to Pope's rescue or to fall back upon Washington. The enemy are evidently determined to strike a blow before McClellan's army can get into position here to co-operate with Pope. To do this with any chance of success, they must attack us in the next ten days. By that time we will have collected here the greater portion of McClellan's army, with their baggage and trains. For my part, the sooner it comes off the better, as I think, after the next great struggle is settled, we will begin to see some prospect of a settlement. If we can only give them a good thrashing, a regular out-and-out victory, I think the demoralization of their forces will be such that they will find it very difficult to collect and organize another army.

WARRENTON, VA., *August 24, 1862.*

I have not written you for several days, and now have only time to tell you in a few words that I am here all right and how I got here. On the 22d we were ordered up to a ford, said to be ten or twelve miles from Fredericksburg, and where it was thought the enemy might cross and threaten Pope's left flank. We started at ten P. M., the night dark and stormy; we lost the road, and after traveling all night, were at daylight only four miles on our journey. We started again, and before proceeding far, we got an order to keep on to a higher ford, so that by night, after one of the hottest days I almost ever experienced, we reached this ford, twenty-seven miles distant, and only six miles from Pope's main army at the crossing of the Rappahannock. The next morning we were ordered up to the

¹ Engagement of Cedar Mountain, Va., August 9, 1862. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 2,381 (O. R.).

Rappahannock Station, and on arriving, heard the news of the enemy's having crossed above and turned Pope's right flank; of Siegel's fight, in which poor Bohlen was killed; found the enemy had been making an effort to force the passage of the Rappahannock over the railroad bridge, but had been repulsed by our artillery; that Pope was obliged to fall back from the Rappahannock, and was then moving off, and we had to follow him. This movement has been successfully performed, thanks, not to Mr. Pope's genius, but to an unlooked-for interposition of Providence in the shape of a rain which has so swollen the Rappahannock that it is not fordable at the usual places; so that they cannot cross, as they intended, on both sides of him, to cut him off. He is not yet out of the scrape, though every day's delay is in his favor, as poor McClellan's army is being rushed up here to his rescue.

I presume the enemy will not let us be quiet here. They have a large force in front of us, and are evidently determined to break through Pope and drive us out of Virginia, when they will follow into Maryland and perhaps Pennsylvania. I am sorry to say, from the manner in which matters have been mismanaged, that their chances of success are quite good. Whether I shall get back with the army to Washington, or go to Richmond, to live on bread and water, or go to my long and final account, are questions that the future only can solve. I am well, which, considering the night and hot sun marches we have just accomplished, is saying a good deal. I am also in good spirits, which is saying a good deal more.

CENTREVILLE, *August 31, 1862.*

I write to advise you that after three days' continuous fighting I am all safe and well.¹ Old Baldy was hit in the leg, but not badly hurt. Willie (your brother) I saw this morning, all safe—Willie Watmough also. All your friends, I believe, are safe. I have had several officers and many men killed and wounded, but no one that you know particularly. We have been obliged to fall back from the old Bull Run battle-field, where we fought. The enemy are superior in force and flushed with their success. We are in a critical position, but I trust will get out of it. This result is no more than might have been known by any one who looked upon things in their proper light.

¹ Second Battle of Bull Run, Va., August 28-30, 1862. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 14,462 (O. R.).

FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, *September 2, 1862—8 A. M.*

All safe and well at this moment. Private letters are forbidden, so ought not to give you any news. Be resigned, and try to look forward with good spirits.

Willie¹ is here and all right. Send word to Betty² at Harrisburg.

ARLINGTON HOUSE, VA., *September 3, 1862.*

We arrived here this morning. Everything now is changed; McClellan's star is again in the ascendant, and Pope's has faded away. The whole army has been withdrawn in the face of the enemy, around Washington, getting back to where we left last March, and now we have to defend our capital, and perhaps resist an invasion of our soil through Maryland, and all from the willful blindness of our rulers. However, this is to no purpose.

I am writing in the house occupied as the headquarters of Whipple's division. I have not time to give you a full account of all I have gone through since leaving Fredericksburg, but will briefly relate. We were ordered up to support Pope, and arrived at the railroad crossing of the Rappahannock just as Pope had found it necessary to fall back on Warrenton. From Warrenton, he, having learned they were still turning his right flank, we started to fall back on Centreville. On the 28th my brigade, the advance of McDowell's corps, was opened upon by a battery, and from that time till the night of the 30th we were pretty much manœuvring and fighting all the time. The principal scene of the conflict was the old battle-ground of Bull Run, with this difference, that we were in the reverse position from what we occupied before, we holding the position occupied by the enemy in the old battle. The fighting continued till the night of the 30th, at which time Pope became satisfied they were in too large numbers for him and would get behind him; whereupon he withdrew to Centreville, and subsequently to Fairfax Court House; Kearney and Hooker having a fight on September 1st, when Kearney and Stevens both were killed; but we succeeded in driving the enemy for miles. The Pennsylvania Reserves were engaged throughout the whole time, and particularly distinguished themselves on the afternoon of the 30th, when our attack on the enemy's right flank having failed, they attacked us very vigorously on our left flank; when the Reserves came into action, and held them in check and drove them

¹ William Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade.

² Wife of William Sergeant.

back, so that when other troops came up, we were enabled to save our left flank, which if we had not done, the enemy would have destroyed the whole army. That night we retreated to Centreville. In a few words, we have been, as usual, *out-manœuvred* and *out-numbered*, and though not actually defeated, yet compelled to fall back on Washington for its defense and our own safety. On these recent battle-fields I claim, as before, to have done my duty. My services, then, should, I think, add to those previously performed, and that I may now fairly claim the command of a division. I suppose, now that McClellan is up again, all his old friends will be as affectionate as ever. I expect the enemy will follow us up, and though I hardly think they will adventure to attack Washington, yet I believe they will try to get into Maryland, and that will necessitate our moving to meet them.

I am quite well, notwithstanding we have been for the last ten days without regular food or sleep. All of my staff and most of the command are completely knocked up, but I am just as well as ever. General Reynolds has been very kind and civil to me.

HEADQUARTERS WHIPPLE'S DIVISION, RESERVE ARMY CORPS,
ARLINGTON, VA., *September 4, 1862.*

I wrote you yesterday, informing you of my arrival at this place. We came here under orders from McDowell (in whose corps we are), who directed us to march from Fairfax Court House to Arlington. Since reaching here we have had no orders of any kind, and we cannot tell where we are going, though I presume we will take post somewhere in the vicinity of the city, for its defense. I hardly think the enemy will make an attack on the city, but believe he will cross a column above into Maryland. Our division, the Reserves, is pretty well used up, and ought, strictly speaking, to be withdrawn, reorganized, filled up with recruits, and put in efficient condition.

WASHINGTON, *September 6, 1862.*

I have only time to send you a check and to say that I saw Seth Williams, and he says McClellan told him to remind him whenever any reorganization took place; or there was a chance to give me a division, I should have it. I also hear we are to be transferred to Porter's corps, and that both Pope and McDowell are relieved of their commands. Everything is in confusion at present and none can tell what will come of it.

CAMP NEAR LEESBORO', MD., *September 8, 1862.*

After writing to you on the 6th, I went to Williards', where I met Willie¹ and his wife. I dined with them, and returned to camp, where I found orders to march. We marched all night and most of the next day, reaching this point, some ten miles north of Washington, yesterday afternoon. We have been here one day, and are to move again to-morrow, and will be, I suppose, kept moving now until something decisive is done with the enemy, who have invaded Maryland. Hooker has been placed in command of McDowell's corps, to which we belong, and Burnside has been placed in Pope's position as commander of an army.

CAMP NEAR POPLAR SPRING, MD., *September 12, 1862.*

We are here as part of Hooker's (late McDowell's) corps, forming a portion of the right wing of the army, under the command of Burnside. I do not know who commands the left wing, nor am I able to ascertain the strength and position of the different corps. The enemy are believed to be at Frederick and behind the line of the Monocacy River; all reported as entrenching themselves and are estimated in various numbers, from two hundred thousand to fifty thousand. I have no doubt myself they are in large force and in strong position. We have always thus found them, and I have no reason to expect a different state now. As I said before, I do not know McClellan's force, or their position, except what immediately surrounds us. We are on the old National Road, connecting Frederick City with Baltimore, and are in a position to cover either that city or Washington. I suppose that in a day or two we will have a chance to tell what the enemy mean and what we can do. I must confess I am not very sanguine of our power. The *morale* of the army is very much impaired by recent events; the spirits of the enemy proportionately raised.

Tell Sergeant² I have received his letter, and that he did right to publish what I said of the Reserves, as it was true. There was a portion of the division that was overwhelmed and fell back in good order on the 30th, but there was no truth in the report that they ran or fled without cause.

CAMP NEAR FREDERICK, MD., *September 13, 1862.*

I wrote you yesterday. My letter had hardly left, when orders came, directing General Reynolds to proceed immediately to Harris-

¹ William Sergeant, brother of Mrs. Meade.

² Son of General Meade.

burg, which of course placed me in command of the division of Pennsylvania Reserves. Reynolds obeyed the order with alacrity, though very much against his will, and General Hooker, commanding the corps to which we are attached, made an immediate and earnest protest against Reynolds's removal. Soon after we marched to this place, which the enemy retired from on our approach. To-day I have seen General McClellan, who was very civil and polite. I only saw him for a few minutes, surrounded by a great crowd; but I saw Seth Williams, who had in his hands Hooker's protest, and seemed quite surprised that Reynolds had left so soon. I told Williams very plainly that I saw no occasion for making such an outcry against Reynolds's removal; that I considered it a reflection on my competency to command the division, and that if he came back on any such grounds, I should insist on being relieved.

I am now ready to meet the enemy, for I feel I am in the position I am entitled to. I should have been delighted to have gone to Harrisburg in Reynolds's place, as I have no doubt he will get a large command there.

The enemy have retired in the direction of Hagerstown. Where they have gone, or what their plans are, is as yet involved in obscurity, and I think our generals are a little puzzled. Their object in coming here seems to have been the procuring of food and clothing, as they had laid their hands on all articles of this description. I suppose we shall have to chase them around, until we find them in some strong position, when they will give us battle, which I trust will be before I lose the command of the division.

FIELD OF BATTLE NEAR SHARPSBURG, *September 18, 1862.*

I commanded the division of Pennsylvania Reserves in the action at South Mountain Gap on the 14th.¹ Our division turned the enemy's left flank and gained the day. Their movements were the admiration of the whole army, and I gained great credit. I was not touched or my horse. Yesterday and the day before my division commenced the battle, and was in the thickest of it.² I was hit by a spent grape-shot, giving me a severe contusion on the right thigh, but not breaking the skin. Baldy was shot through the neck, but

¹ Battle of South Mountain, September 14, 1862. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 2,346 (O. R.).

² Battle of the Antietam, September 17, 1862. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 12,410 (O. R.).

will get over it. A cavalry horse I mounted afterwards was shot in the flank. When General Hooker was wounded, General McClellan placed me in command of the army corps, over General Ricketts's head, who ranked me. This selection is a great compliment, and answers all my wishes in regard to my desire to have my services appreciated. I cannot ask for more, and am truly grateful for the merciful manner I have been protected, and for the good fortune that has attended me. I go into the action to-day as the commander of an army corps. If I survive, my *two* stars are secure, and if I fall, you will have my reputation to live on. God bless you all! I cannot write more. I am well and in fine spirits. Your brother Willie is up here, but was not in action yesterday.

SHARPSBURG, MD., *September 20, 1862.*

I wrote you a few lines, day before yesterday, on the field of battle, hurriedly, and at a time when we expected every moment the battle would be renewed. The battle of the day previous had been a very severe one, and our army was a good deal broken and somewhat demoralized—so much so that it was deemed hazardous to risk an offensive movement on our part until the reinforcements arriving from Washington should reach the scene of action. Yesterday morning, at early dawn, we moved forward, when lo! the bird had flown, and we soon ascertained from prisoners, taken straggling on the field, and from the evidences the field itself bore, that we had hit them much harder than they had us, and that in reality our battle was a victory. They all crossed the river and retreated into Virginia, the night of the battle, so that Maryland is free, and their audacious invasion of our soil put an end to. Whether the country will be satisfied with this or not I cannot say, but it ought to be, as I am free to confess I feared at one time the movement from Washington was a dangerous one, for if we were defeated and this army broken up, the country was gone. Now, if there is any common sense in the country, it ought to let us have time to reorganize and get into shape our new lines, and then advance with such overwhelming numbers that resistance on the part of the enemy would be useless. My command took a great many prisoners. They all concurred in saying that the Southern army was dispirited; that the great bulk were tired of the war and of fighting, and would be glad of any settlement that would terminate it. They were ragged, shoeless and half starved, and were certainly in a most pitiable condition.

I am afraid I shall not get the credit for these last battles that I did for those near Richmond, for two reasons: First, I was not wounded; second, old Sam Ringwalt was not there to write letters about me. I find the papers barely mention the Pennsylvania Reserves, call them McCall's troops, never mentioning my name; whereas I was not only in command, but at South Mountain, on the 14th, I was on the extreme right flank, had the conduct of the whole operations, and never saw General Hooker, commanding the corps, after getting his instructions, till the whole affair was over. I must, however, do Hooker the justice to say that he promptly gave me credit for what I did, and have reason to believe it was his urgent appeal to McClellan, that I was the right man to take his place when he was wounded, which secured my being assigned to the command of the corps. I send you two pencil notes received on the field of battle, which I wish preserved as evidences of my having done my duty, and which I think will bear this out when it is remembered that there were on the field several major generals in command of divisions only, besides several brigadiers who were my seniors, and one of them in the corps I was assigned to. These papers, written on the field of battle, amply compensate. A man who under such circumstances is elevated to rank may well be proud of the fact, and can hardly have his elevation charged to political or petticoat influence.

Yesterday we were occupied moving up from our position on the battle-field to the river, which the enemy succeeded in crossing before we could stop them. To-day Porter's corps was sent over, but not being properly supported, the enemy turned on him, and he had to retire to this side.

* * * * *

"Pencil Notes," McClellan to Meade, mentioned in last letter.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
September 17, 1:25 P. M., 1862.

BRG. GENL. GEO. MEADE
Genl.

The Commanding Gen'l directs that you temporarily assume command of Hooker's Corps, and use every effort in your power to reorganize it and make it available.

It is *absolutely necessary* that the right should be held, and the

troops must be got together and into position for that purpose as rapidly as possible.

Yours very Respy.

COULBURN

A. A. G.

HEAD QUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
3 hours, 10 min., *September 17, 1862.*

GENERAL MEADE

General

The Commanding Gen'l directs that you at once take command of the Army Corps, which was under the command of Genl. Hooker this morning. This order is given without regard to rank and all officers of the Corps will obey your orders. The Comdg. Genl. also directs me to say that you will be held responsible for this command as herein assigned to you.

Very Respectfully

R. B. MARCY

Chief of Staff.

* * * * *

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., *September 23, 1862.*

We have been very quiet the last few days, with now and then a stampede of the enemy, crossing at this place and that. I have no idea myself that he will attempt any more invasions of Maryland, the last having proved the most lamentable failure, both politically and in a military sense. Our army is stretched along the banks of the Potomac from Harper's Ferry to Williamsport. *My corps* was under orders yesterday to march to Harper's Ferry, but the order was countermanded before the time for moving came. I saw your brother Willie yesterday; he is quite well, but greatly disgusted in not having been in any of the recent battles. Although the papers are silent on the subject of the Pennsylvania Reserves, yet I can assure you in the army they are now acknowledged as the best division for fighting in the whole army, and are praised everywhere.

James Biddle arrived the day after the last battle and joined Ricketts' staff. Young Kingsbury, whom you may remember seeing at Mrs. Turnbull's, was killed. One of my aides, Lieutenant Riddle,

of Pittsburg, was shot in the hand. Old Baldy is doing well and is good for lots of fights yet.

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, *September 27, 1862.*

I have received your letters of the 20th and 23d. In the latter you had received my pencil note of the 18th, and were aware of my success and promotion, which I must say you take in the most humble manner and pretty much as if it were no more than you expected. In regard to my newspaper fame, I agree with you, that when wounded I was *over-advertised*; but this time not a single paper yet has announced that on the battle-field I was selected to command a *corps d'armee*, in place of Hooker, which fact, after all, is the greatest feather in my cap. Hooker has received his reward, having been appointed a brigadier general in the regular army, in place of Mansfield, killed in battle.

I don't think I ever told you about Master John¹ at Bull Run, on the first day's fighting. He came on a part of the field, with my spare horse and some cigars for me. On arriving where the balls were flying, John's courage oozed out, and he declined proceeding any farther, but gave the cigars to an orderly to bring to me in the advance. On his return, the orderly could not find him, and I never saw anything of John or the horse till we got to Arlington Heights, when he presented himself and said that he heard I was cut off and a prisoner, and he had gone to Alexandria to save the horse for the *family*. I charged him with, and he frankly acknowledged his cowardice. I sent for a file of men, intending to have him drummed out of camp as a coward; but he begged so piteously I let him off, and since then he has behaved pretty well. Still, no reliance is to be placed on him at the very moment when his services are most needed, and I intend to let him go as soon as I can get some one to take his place.

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., *September 29, 1862.*

Yesterday General Reynolds made his appearance, very much disgusted with his Pennsylvania campaign and militia, who he says behaved very badly, refused to come forward, and would not have stood five minutes if they had been attacked by one-tenth their number. He hurried back here as soon as possible, knowing of course he would have command of the corps, as I could not expect Mc-

¹ General Meade's body-servant.

Clellan to put him under my command. We went to see McClellan together. He was very civil to me, said he would have to put Reynolds in command, but hoped in a few days to announce to both of us that we were major generals, which he had strongly urged on the Government. As yet the order has not been issued, but when it comes I shall subside gracefully into a division commander, though frankness compels me to say, I do wish Reynolds had stayed away, and that I could have had a chance to command a corps in action. Perhaps it may yet occur. At any rate, it would be great ingratitude in me to complain, after all my recent good fortune.

McClellan said it was not his intention to immediately cross the river, unless it should rise and prevent the enemy's crossing, in which case he would cross and attack him. His most reliable intelligence led him to believe that they were falling back on Winchester, which is no more than reasonable, as I do not see how they can supply their army in so advanced a position as Martinsburg. I spoke to McClellan about the Reserves and their decimated condition, there being now not more than three thousand men for duty. I also told him that I had no idea they would ever be filled up by recruiting officers, and the only course I saw to adopt was to send them in a body back to Pennsylvania, and ask the Governor and State to fill them up within a specified time; but if it could not be done, they were to be mustered out of service.

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., *October 1, 1862.*

I note the *canard* about General Sickles taking command of Hooker's corps, which arose from the fact that General Sickles has been placed in command of Hooker's old division. So, also, I saw a brilliant account in Forney's "Press" of the battle of Antietam, in which the writer, confusing Hooker's division with his corps, speaks of the gallantry of Generals Patterson and Grover in leading the men; whereas Hooker's division was at Alexandria, when Grover was with it, and Patterson has been for some time in Philadelphia. But such is history.

When Hooker placed me in command of the corps on the field, I immediately sought out Ricketts, told him I presumed there was a mistake, Hooker not knowing that he (Ricketts) outranked me, and I turned over the command to him, and only resumed it after getting the peremptory order from McClellan, which I sent you. Ricketts appreciated my course, and said there was no one he was more will-

ing to serve under than myself, and that he only made his protest because he considered it a matter of principle. In this I think he was right, and I should have done the same thing myself, for I do not believe McClellan had the right to do as he did.

I am very much flattered to hear that Mr. Binney¹ and other citizens desired to have me to defend Philadelphia. It was just as well, however, that they were refused; the service would have been temporary, and I should have lost the brilliant chances of the two battles. I envied Reynolds when he left for Harrisburg, and secretly thought the Governor might have applied for me. Afterwards—indeed, the next day, after South Mountain—I was grateful beyond measure that I had been overlooked. In reference to George,² I think he had better accept the appointment in Averill's regiment, and not wait any longer for Rush.³ In regard to my own staff, I have received a letter from Mr. Coxe,⁴ in which he says his last hope is being elected into one of the Pennsylvania Reserve regiments. This amounts to nothing, because Seymour and Reynolds have prohibited elections in the division, and there have been none for some time. In the meantime, I have had two young men serving temporarily on my staff. One is a Mr. Mason, belonging to one of the Reserve regiments, and the other Mr. Dehon, of Boston, belonging to the Twelfth Massachusetts (Fletcher Webster's regiment). They are both very clever and active.

In regard to Willie, your brother, I will see what can be done. The trouble is, both Seymour and Reynolds have got into a snarl with the Governor about elections, the Governor maintaining that he will not appoint without elections, and they (in orders) prohibiting elections and getting McClellan to give acting appointments, subject to the approval of the Governor, which appointments are never submitted to the Governor for his approval. The consequence is there are a number of officers appointed who have never been commissioned by the Governor, and who in reality have no commissions. This makes it very difficult to know what to do, and how to unravel the snarl that Seymour and Reynolds have got into.

The news has just been brought into camp that the Southern Confederacy have sent Peace Commissioners to Washington. Alas,

¹ Horace Binney, of the Philadelphia Bar.

² George Meade, son of General Meade and compiler of this work.

³ Richard H. Rush, colonel 6th Pa. Cavalry, known as "Rush's Lancers."

⁴ Alexander Brinton Coxe, of Philadelphia.

I fear, they have left it too late, and that the day has gone by for any terms to be granted them except complete submission! Either one extreme or the other will have to come to pass—the day for compromise, for a brotherly reconciliation, for the old Union, in reality as well as name, has passed away, and the struggle must be continued till one side or the other is exhausted and willing to give up. Peace—oh, what a glorious word, and how sweet and delightful would its realization be to me! And if such is the case, how desirable for thousands and thousands of others, who have not gained, as I have by war, distinction and fame!

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., *October 5, 1862.*

Since writing to you the President of the United States has visited our camp and reviewed our corps. I had the distinguished honor of accompanying him to the battle-field, where General McClellan pointed out to him the various phases of the day, saying here it was that Meade did this and there Meade did that; which all was very gratifying to me. He seemed very much interested in all the movements of Hooker's corps. I do not know the purport of the President's visit, but I think it was to urge McClellan on, regardless of his views, or the condition of the army. I think, however, he was informed of certain facts in connection with this army which have opened his eyes a little, and which may induce him to pause and reflect before he interferes with McClellan by giving positive orders. For instance, the following, confidentially written: I prepared a statement, showing that Hooker's corps on paper was thirty-one thousand five hundred strong; that of this number there were present for duty only twelve thousand, and of these, a numerical list, made on the day of the battle, after we came out of action, showed only seven thousand. Hence, while the United States were *paying*, and the authorities at Washington were *relying* and basing their orders and plans on the belief that we had thirty-one thousand five hundred men, facts showed that we had in reality, on the field fighting, only nine thousand. As to the seven thousand that came out of the fight, we should add some two thousand killed and wounded in it. It would take too much time to explain this apparent paradox. Suffice it to say, it results from a serious evil, due to the character and constitution of our volunteer force, and from the absence of that control over the men, which is the consequence of the inefficiency of the officers commanding them—I mean regimental and com-

pany officers. Three days after the battle this corps numbered twelve thousand officers and men, though on the evening of the battle we could only muster seven thousand. Now, the difference of five thousand constituted the cowards, skulkers, men who leave the ground with the wounded and do not return for days, the stragglers on the march, and all such characters, which are to be found in every army, but never in so great a ratio as in this volunteer force of ours. I believe all that saves us is the fact that they are no better off on the other side, and it is well known that on the 17th instant the roads to Winchester on the one side, and Hagerstown and Frederick on the other, were filled with men who turned their backs on their respective commands engaged in fighting. It is, from all I can learn, about as bad on one side as the other.

*To John Sergeant Meade:*¹

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., October 11, 1862.

We have many rumors in regard to the changes in the commanding general of this army, and it seems to be generally conceded that if McClellan is removed, Hooker will succeed him. Some say McClellan is again to be commanding general of the whole army at Washington, and Halleck is to return to the West, but I can hardly believe this. Hooker is a very good soldier and a capital officer to command an army corps, but I should doubt his qualifications to command a large army. If fighting, however, is all that is necessary to make a general, he will certainly distinguish himself. I am afraid Stuart's recent raid to Chambersburg will do McClellan serious injury, though at this season of the year, when the upper Potomac can be crossed almost anywhere, it was a physical impossibility with our force to prevent his crossing at some point. We are now trying to catch him on his way back, and I trust we shall succeed, though I expect he will make a wide sweep either to the westward or eastward and try to get around all our forces.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., October 12, 1862.

Hooker and I are old acquaintances. We were at West Point together, served in Mexico together, and have met from time to

¹ Son of General Meade.

time since. He is a very good soldier, capital general for an army corps, but I am not prepared to say as to his abilities for carrying on a campaign and commanding a large army. I should fear his judgment and prudence, as he is apt to think the only thing to be done is to pitch in and fight. He injured himself in Mexico by attaching himself to Pillow and his clique. Soon after the Mexican war, being in California, he resigned, did not succeed in private life, and at one time I understood he was quite low in fortune, and was glad to accept the position of wagon-master. His want of success, added to other causes, led him at this time into dissipation, and many of his friends thought he was ruined and gone. At the commencement of these troubles he repaired to Washington, and through California influence procured one of the first appointments as brigadier general. At Williamsburg he did some desperate fighting, and had a flare up with Sumner and McClellan. Being always intimate with the President, on McDowell's being relieved he got his corps, with which he was fortunate at South Mountain and Antietam. Now he is made, and his only danger is the fear that he will allow himself to be used by McClellan's enemies to injure him. Hooker is a Democrat and anti-Abolitionist—that is to say, he was. What he will be, when the command of the army is held out to him, is more than any one can tell, because I fear he is open to temptation and liable to be seduced by flattery.

McClellan does not seem to have made as much out of his operations in Maryland as I had hoped he would, and as I think he is entitled to. His failure to immediately pursue Lee (which Hooker would have done), and now this raid of Stuart's in our rear (for permitting which the public will hold McClellan accountable), will go far towards taking away from him the prestige of his recent victories. I don't wish you to mention it, but I think myself he errs on the side of prudence and caution, and that a little more rashness on his part would improve his generalship.

Stuart's raid will undoubtedly interfere with our contemplated movements, for he destroyed at Chambersburg a large amount of clothing destined for this army, which the men are greatly in need of, and without which they can hardly move.

October 13.

Stuart has succeeded in eluding all our pursuing parties, and has crossed the Potomac near the mouth of the Monocacy, having passed completely around our army and stripped the country clean on his

track. This is the third time the rascal has successfully accomplished this feat, and I think it is almost time we had learned how to meet and defeat him. I expected, however, that he would get off, because our cavalry was scattered, and could not be collected in time to oppose him and cut him off. This will be a mortifying affair to McClellan, and will do him, I fear, serious injury. I am getting very tired of inactivity, and though I am not fond of fighting, yet if we have to do it, I think the sooner we get at it and have it over the better. I have just been to see Humphreys, who has a division of raw Pennsylvania troops right near us. I was mistaken in saying the Corn Exchange regiment was in his division. It is attached to the division commanded by Major General Morrell.

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, MD., *October 20, 1862.*

Our last advices from the enemy are that he is falling back from Winchester, but every hour and day bring their different report, and perhaps this afternoon we will hear he is advancing to cross the river. For my part I wish he would stay and meet us, for if he falls toward Richmond we shall be compelled to follow him, and it is getting too late to campaign in the northern part of Virginia, in consequence of the bad condition of the roads as soon as it begins to rain; whereas if he will only stay about Winchester, we can in one or two days' march come up with him. Everyone who returns to camp says that McClellan's position is most precarious, and that if he does not advance soon and do something brilliant, he will be superseded. At the same time they do not, or will not, send from Washington the supplies absolutely necessary for us to have before we can move. I have *hundreds* of men in my command without shoes, going barefooted, and I can't get a shoe for a man or beast. I had to send money to-day to Frederick to buy shoes, to have my horses shod, which article the Government is bound to furnish me with, and yet they won't send them. Our artillery horses and train animals have been literally starving, and have been suffering for the want of forage, and our men for the want of clothing, and yet we can't get these things.

To John Sergeant Meade:

CAMP NEAR SHARPSBURG, *October 23, 1862.*

We are in hourly expectation of marching orders. We have been detained here by the failure of the Government to push forward rein-

forcements and supplies. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that as early as the 7th of this month a telegram was sent to Washington informing the Clothing Department that my division wanted three thousand pairs of shoes, and that up to this date not a single pair has yet been received (a large number of my men are barefooted) and it is the same thing with blankets, overcoats, etc., also with ammunition and forage. What the cause of this unpardonable delay is I can not say, but certain it is, that some one is to blame, and that it is hard the army should be censured for inaction, when the most necessary supplies for their movement are *withheld*, or at least not promptly forwarded when called for.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP NEAR BERLIN, MD., *October 28, 1862.*

Day before yesterday we received orders to move to this place. We immediately started in a pouring rain, and marched some nine miles before nightfall. The next day the weather fortunately changed and we reached here in good time. This place is opposite Leesburg, already several corps have crossed the river, and we hear our people are in Leesburg. It is also reported that we have occupied Winchester with our cavalry, without opposition, but this is not very reliable. At any rate we are about advancing, and it is for the enemy to say whether or not he will dispute our march, as I have before written to you, I hope he will, as the nearer we find him the better for us, and the more dangerous for him. This fact, however, leads me to believe he will fall back to the line of the Rappahannock, which will compel us to march some distance before we can get into his vicinity. I think my division will cross the river to-morrow. We have a pontoon bridge at this point, and bridges at Harper's Ferry some six miles above here. The army is crossing at both places, and I suppose will continue to advance towards Richmond until they meet with opposition.

I see the papers state that McClellan has written the Department at Washington that he has been fully supplied with everything as fast as he called for it. This is false, and I know it to be false. I saw in another paper that the excuse given by the Department, for failing to supply the army, was the large and unexpected losses encountered in the Pope campaign.

CAMP NEAR BERLIN, MD., *October 29, 1862.*

I am very glad you were so much pleased with Mr. Dehon. His visit to you was in truth a great compliment, because it was the sole cause of his stopping in Philadelphia. His son is a very clever young man, about twenty-two years of age, whom I accidentally encountered when I was in command of the Army Corps, and very much in want of staff officers. He was recommended to me by young Williams,¹ on Rickett's staff, who simply said he was a gentleman. I have been so much pleased with him, that after my return to the Division, I retained him, although I hardly had that right, he belonging to another division. His father, who has been a Boston democrat, was very prominent in getting up the Twelfth Regiment for Fletcher Webster. I presume this favor to him, for it was a favor, did much towards impressing him agreeably in regard to me. Now you will say this is my modesty and usual underrating of my exceeding great abilities. I must confess I was not aware that I was such a hero as you say the public declare me to be, and I fear it will take more than newspaper correspondents and your great love to make me believe I am anything more than an ordinary soldier conscientiously doing his duty. One thing, however, I am willing to admit, and that is, that I consider myself as good as most of my neighbors, and without great vanity may say that I believe myself to be better than some who are much higher.

As to the termination of the war, I see no prospect of such a desirable result. A war so unnecessary must last till one or the other side is brought to its senses by the oppressive burdens that ensue. As yet, this state of affairs has not been reached. The South accepts ruin, and is willing to have all its material interests destroyed if it can only secure its independence. The North, owing to the villainous system of paper money, the postponement of taxation and of the draft, has not yet realized the true condition of the country.

CAMP NEAR WATERFORD, VA., *November 1, 1862.*

I intended to have written you a long letter to-day, but just as I was getting ready, the orders for us to move on arrived. We crossed the river day before yesterday, and reached this camp. Yesterday I was busy exploring the country. I also had to go with Reynolds to see Burnside, who is near us. Among his officers I met young Pell, son of Duncan Pell, of New York, about whom I think I wrote to

¹ John Worthington Williams, of Philadelphia.

you during the Pope campaign. At any rate, Burnside sent him to Reynolds when we left Fredericksburg. On returning he was captured and fell into the hands of A. P. Hill, who knowing Burnside very intimately, treated Pell with much kindness and distinction. Soon after his capture the battle of Bull Run began. Pell says he told Hill he would like to see the fun, whereupon Hill mounted him and took him on the field, where he (Pell) saw the whole battle. He says they were whipped the first day, and if we had only pressed them the second day they would have retreated.

We are in a beautiful country, the valley of the Catoctin Creek, between Leesburg and Winchester. We do not hear much about the enemy. Tell Sergeant¹ to get you Lord's map of the state of Virginia, it gives a fair description and idea of localities. For instance, we are not far from Waterford now, and we expect to be near Hamilton to-night.

CAMP NEAR PURCELLVILLE, VA., *November 3, 1862.*

We yesterday moved to this place, which for a time placed us in the advance, but to-day Burnside has gone ahead of us, and I presume to-morrow we shall push on again. It appears the enemy are still either in the Valley of the Shenandoah or are manœuvring to make us believe so. To-day their cavalry in large force, with artillery, have been disputing the advance of our cavalry, and I understand this afternoon they displayed infantry. If this be the case, they either intend to give us battle in this valley, which lies between the Bull Run Mountains and the Mountains of the Shenandoah, or else they desire to check our advance and gain time to concentrate their forces in those mountain defiles, which the position of our forces seem to threaten. Of these gaps, or defiles, there are two principal ones, one called Ashby's Gap, through which the pike from Alexandria to Winchester runs; the other, Snicker's Gap, through which the pike from Leesburg to Winchester passes. One or the other of these, or probably both, we shall attempt to force, and they of course to dispute, in case they are going to remain at Winchester. Their infantry appearing would seem to indicate they feel strong enough to descend the mountain and meet us in this valley, which I think is all the better for us, as it would save us the trouble of forcing the mountain passes, which, after all, as at South Mountain, is only a preliminary step to the battle to be fought afterwards. It is not impossible, therefore, we may have a decisive battle in a day or two,

¹ Son of General Meade.

of which perhaps the telegraph will give you notice before this reaches you. At the same time, they are so skillful in strategy, all their present movements may only be to cover the withdrawal of their army to Gordonsville and the line of the Rapidan. If it should prove so, as we will have immediately to follow them and attack them there, we might just as well do so here as to have to march some forty or fifty miles to do the same thing. We shall have, from all I can learn, about one hundred and thirty thousand men, nearly double our force at Antietam. I don't see how they can have doubled theirs, in which case we ought to outnumber them; and if we only do that, and are properly handled, victory is sure to be ours.

I saw to-day General Willcox, our Detroit friend. I also saw Poe for a few minutes yesterday, looking very well, but very much disgusted at not being made a brigadier general. He told me he was in Washington a few days ago and saw General Halleck about his promotion, showing him letters from Generals Kearney, Hooker, Stoneman and others under whom he had served, warmly recommending his promotion. Halleck told him they were the strongest letters he had ever seen and proved most fully his claims, but said he: "To be frank with you, Colonel Poe, with only *such letters* (*i. e.*, military evidence of fitness), your chances of promotion are about equal to those of a *stumped-tail bull in fly-time*." In other words, *merit* without *political influence* is no argument in your favor. Poe told me that Chandler was bitterly opposed to him and had denounced him to the War Department as disloyal, and that he had been compelled to file at the War Department evidences of his loyalty. I told him he ought to have sent to you for a letter endorsing his Black Republicanism at Detroit in the spring of 1861, at which he laughed. He told me Kirby Smith had never been in a fight, and received his wound at Corinth, at the very commencement of the action, just as he was mounting his horse. He also said he heard the other day of Beckham, through an officer who was a prisoner, and that Beckham was chief of artillery to G. W. Smith's division. He knew nothing of Procter Smith, but understood he was in the Confederate service.

CAMP AT WARRENTON, VA., November 7, 1862.

To-day Alexander Coxe¹ has arrived. He had a pretty hard time catching us, and had to ride yesterday nearly fifty miles.

I have not had time to write to you for some days past, as we

¹ Alexander Brinton Coxe, aide-de-camp to General Meade.

have been marching all the time, and owing to the crowded state of the roads, we have been obliged to leave camp very early in the morning and be detained till late in getting in. One night it was twelve o'clock before we went into camp. Soon after I wrote you, our reconnoitering parties ascertained positively the enemy had been or were falling back from Winchester, when we immediately started to try and get ahead of them; an operation I never had the remotest idea we would or could succeed in, as they are much less encumbered with trains than we are, and are much better marchers. Our corps and division reached this place last evening, the storm and the necessity of waiting till the railroad to this place can be opened and supplies thrown forward, have delayed us somewhat.

I note all you say about George.¹ He will have a comparatively pleasant time, and I will quote for your comfort a part of a secesh lady's letter recently captured (*i. e.*, the letter) in which she says: "I want John (her son) to go into the cavalry, because I see that very few of that arm of the service are either killed or wounded," which is a fact; we have not lost over a dozen cavalry officers since the war began.

CAMP NEAR WARRENTON, VA., November 8, 1862.

To-day the order has been received relieving McClellan from duty with this army, and placing Burnside in command. I must confess I was surprised at this, as I thought the storm had blown over. If he had been relieved immediately after the battle of Antietam, or at any period before he moved, I could have seen some show of reason on *military* grounds. This removal now proves conclusively that the cause is political, and the date of the order, November 5th (the day after the New York election) confirms it.

The army is filled with gloom and greatly depressed. Burnside, it is said, wept like a child, and is the most distressed man in the army, openly says he is not fit for the position, and that McClellan is the only man we have who can handle the large army collected together, one hundred and twenty thousand men. We (the generals) are going to-morrow in a body to pay our respects and bid farewell to McClellan, who leaves in the afternoon. He is ordered to Trenton, N. J., to await further orders.

CAMP NEAR WARRENTON, VA., November 9, 1862.

To-day, in company with the other generals of our corps, I called to see McClellan. Reynolds made a few remarks, saying we had

¹ Son of General Meade, lieutenant 6th Pa. Cav.—"Rush's Lancers."

learned with deep regret of his departure and sincerely hoped he would soon return. McClellan was very much affected, almost to tears, and said that separation from this army was the severest blow that could be inflicted upon him. The army is greatly depressed.

We have had quite a snow storm, and to-day, though clear, is very raw and cold. Our men suffer a good deal; what the Southerners do, without clothing or shelter of any kind, I cannot imagine. I should think their sufferings must be very much greater than ours. Sumner has returned, and it is said Hooker is coming. If he does, Reynolds will take my division, and I shall come down to a brigade. The removal of McClellan, however, will keep Hooker away, if he can possibly avoid coming, as I know he will not serve voluntarily under Burnside. Still, it is said Hooker has injured himself very much by his prolonged stay in Washington, where he has talked too much and too indiscreetly, and that he is not now half as strong as when he went there.

Tell Sargie¹ I have received and perused with great interest the thrilling tale, in *Peterson's*, of the wonderful magnanimity of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Such heroes don't live nowadays.

CAMP NEAR RAPPAHANNOCK STATION, VA., November 13, 1862.

Day before yesterday we moved to this position, some ten miles from Warrenton. On the same day McClellan left us, to the regret and sincere grief of the whole army. Yesterday, I am informed, Generals Halleck and Meigs made their appearance at Warrenton, and it is understood a grand council of war is to be held to-day. McClellan has always objected to operating on this line, and insisted on the James River as being the proper base for operations. Halleck, under Washington influence, has been trying to force operations on this line—that is, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Now, this road has but one track, and the distance from Alexandria to Gordonsville is over one hundred and fifty miles. This distance and the known capacity of the road is insufficient by one-third to carry the daily supplies required for this army. This fact to an ordinarily intelligent mind, unbiased by ridiculous fears for the safety of Washington, ought to be conclusive. The next line, and the one Burnside favors as a compromise, is the one from Fredericksburg to Richmond. This is open to the same objection as the other, except it is only seventy-five miles. Still, it will require a larger army to protect these seventy-five miles and keep open our communications than

¹ Son of General Meade.

it will to attack Richmond itself. What the result of the council will be, no one can tell; but, as I have above conjectured, it is probable that, if Burnside proves stubborn, he will be told he must give way to one who is more reasonable. I also hear that Hooker is at Warrenton, and has been placed in command of Fitz-John Porter's corps, Porter having been relieved and ordered to Washington. I have not seen Hooker, as he did not arrive at Warrenton till after I had left. His having command only of a corps, under Burnside, in command of the army, and Sumner in command of two corps, is decidedly a coming down for Hooker, from the expectations the army and the public had been led to indulge in from the tone of the public press; and confirms what I have told you, that Hooker talked himself out in Washington. What we are coming to I cannot tell, but I must confess this interference by politicians with military men, and these personal intrigues and bickerings among military men, make me feel very sad and very doubtful of the future. It does seem as if Providence was against us, and that it was decreed we should not succeed as we ought to. The assigning of Hooker to Porter's corps leaves Reynolds, I presume, permanently in command of our corps, and will leave me undisturbed in command of my division. For this I ought to be, and am, duly grateful, and as some time since it was the height of my ambition to have a division, I suppose I ought to be satisfied with its accomplishment, which I would be, if I saw matters going on in other respects as I think they ought to.

The enemy, who for some time were disposed to dispute our advance and had constant skirmishing with us, have been quiet for two days past. They are said to be in force at Culpepper Court House, some eighteen miles in our front, and Jackson, with a considerable body, is reported as being yet in the Valley of the Shenandoah, waiting for a good chance to fall on our rear, and effect one of his bold and audacious raids. I look anxiously to see the result of McClellan's removal on the public mind.

CAMP NEAR RAPPAHANNOCK STATION, *November 14, 1862.*

Generals Halleck and Meigs, as I anticipated, objected to the change of base from the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to the Fredericksburg Railroad, but after discussion yielded their views to those of the general officers in command, and have returned to Washington, to endeavor to obtain the sanction of the still greater general, Stanton. It is also understood the army is to be divided into three

commands, each of two corps, to be commanded respectively by Sumner, Hooker and Franklin. Our corps is to be under Franklin. Baldy Smith takes Franklin's corps, and Sykes is to have Porter's corps.

General McCall sent me Hooker's report of the battle of Glendale,¹ and called on me, as the present commander of the division, to reply to it; but I answered him that I considered his being in command at that time constituted him the proper person to reply, and if not himself, then Seymour, who commanded the Third Brigade, which was on the left of our line and adjacent to Hooker's command. I further told McCall that I hardly thought it worth while to make any public reply to Hooker; that the reputation of the Reserves was now well established, and the facts of the New Market battle very generally known, and Hooker's report would carry its antidote with its bane. What McCall has done I do not know, as I have not heard from him since. I have no doubt a portion of Seymour's command did run through Hooker's line, but he has made the mistake of confounding this portion of one brigade with the whole division, thus depriving us of the credit of having for four hours resisted an overwhelming onset of vastly superior numbers, and by this resistance, and the check which we gave the enemy, preventing his piercing our army, and enabling it that night to concentrate on the banks of the James River, which they *never would have or could have effected* if our *whole division* had run at the first fire, as Hooker charges.

CAMP NEAR RAPPAHANNOCK STATION, *November 16, 1862.*

To-day is Sunday. No church bells, or stream of well-dressed people on their way to church, or eloquent appeals from the pulpit for us poor fellows, doomed to practically set aside some of the most prominent of God's laws, in reference to charity and love to our neighbors.

No orders have yet been received for our division to move, though it is understood Burnside's project has been approved and the movement towards Fredericksburg has commenced. I suppose some time in the course of to-day, or perhaps in the night, our orders will come. I have seen no one since leaving Warrenton, not even Reynolds, who has spent most of his time at that place pow-wowing with the *big Indians*, so that I am not posted up in plans, hopes, or fears. Seymour has been relieved from duty with this army, at his own request,

¹Or New Market Road, June 30, 1862.

that he might go to a warmer climate. He left us this morning. Seymour was an excellent soldier, of good judgment, cool courage, and in time of action of great and valuable assistance, as I found at South Mountain and Antietam. As these are considerations of the utmost importance, his loss will be seriously felt by me. I have now but one brigadier under me, and he a promotion from one of the Reserve regiments—a very good man. The other two brigades are commanded by colonels, both West Pointers—one, Magilton, the other Sinclair, a young officer of artillery, will, I think, prove efficient and of assistance.

CAMP NEAR STAFFORD COURT HOUSE, VA., *November 20, 1862.*

The occupation of the march the last few days has prevented my writing to you. I suppose you have seen in the papers the order dividing the army into three grand divisions, and giving the command of certain corps to the senior officers on duty with those corps. This places General Butterfield in command of Porter's corps. General Butterfield is my junior, and I am his only senior on duty with this army. I thought that both Stoneman and A. S. Williams had divisions, both of whom are my seniors; but to-day I find Stoneman has a corps and that Williams is not with this army, having been left on the Potomac. Hence I am the only general who is affected by the giving a corps to Butterfield. I saw to-day Franklin and Baldy Smith, who referred to this matter, and said Burnside did not know how to arrange it otherwise, and they thought if I made an application to Burnside and gave him any chance of acting, that he would assign me to the corps. This, however, is a very delicate matter, and I have seen several cases where such action has ended to the discomfiture of the protestant. I will, however, see Parke and have a talk with him, and see how the land lies, and if there is any prospect of effecting any good, I will act. I presume you understand the question. General Butterfield does not command me, but his command being a corps, and I his senior, in command only of a division, I have a right to complain; just as I did when, in command of a brigade, so many of my juniors were commanding divisions. Again, Martindale belongs to that corps, and will doubtless, now that he is acquitted by the court, return to duty, and he is my senior, and would have the right to command it.

I presume you have seen Halleck's letter in regard to the supplying of the army. It is a piece of special pleading well worthy the brain of General Halleck, but unfortunately there are too many *facts*

in the possession of this army to disprove all he asserts, which I trust McClellan will now come out publicly and expose. My letters to you of themselves are sufficient evidence, and nearly every general officer in the army can testify to the same facts, viz., that their requisitions for clothing, ammunition and other supplies, made early in October, were not filled till the end of the month, just before the movement across the river began. But what are truths and facts against political and personal malice and vindictiveness?

CAMP NEAR STAFFORD COURT HOUSE, VA., *November 22, 1862.*

It rained very hard all day yesterday, rendering the roads in this vicinity nearly impassable. The railroad from Acquia Creek to Fredericksburg will take ten days or two weeks to put in order, if it can be done in that time. In the meantime, we have to haul all our supplies from the landing at Acquia Creek, ten miles distant, over roads which are barely passable with half-loaded wagons, and which in a short time, from the great number of trains passing over them, will become impassable. Hence we have out, since we have been here, the greater portion of our command, trying to make the roads passable by corduroying them—a work of labor and time. I do not see how we can advance from the Rappahannock unless the weather should turn cold and freeze the ground. In view of these obstacles, it is most trying to read the balderdash in the public journals about being in Richmond in ten days. I question if we can get in the neighborhood of Richmond this winter, on this line. I have no doubt the attempt is to be made and an effort to force us on, but I predict, unless we have a cold spell, freezing the ground, that we will break down, lose all our animals, experience great suffering from want of supplies, and if the enemy are at all energetic, meet with a check, if not disaster. All this comes from taking the wrong line of operations, the James River being the true and only practicable line of approach to Richmond. But I have always maintained that Richmond need not and should not be attacked at all; that the proper mode to reduce it is to take possession of the great lines of railroad leading to it from the South and Southwest, cut these and stop any supplies going there, and their army will be compelled to evacuate it and meet us on the ground we can select ourselves. The blind infatuation of the authorities at Washington, sustained, I regret to say, by Halleck, who as a soldier ought to know better, will not permit the proper course to be adopted, and we shall have to take the consequences. Perhaps the difficulty of moving may become so great

and apparent that we will be compelled to go into winter quarters here, but this will be resisted to the last by the sages at Washington. I could not get to General Burnside's headquarters either yesterday or the day before, although his camp is only six miles from mine, but the condition of the roads, and the rise in a creek between us, effectually cut off all communications.

CAMP NEAR ACQUIA CREEK, *November 23, 1862.*

We moved here yesterday to be on the railroad, nearer to our supplies, for the condition of the roads was such that there was danger of starvation from the impossibility of hauling loaded wagons over them.

You will see by the papers that the enemy have appeared at Fredericksburg, and evinced a disposition to dispute our crossing the river and occupying that place. I think this is only to gain time, and do not believe they have any very serious intentions of fighting here, as it is decidedly against their interest. Their policy is to draw us as far as possible from the Potomac and then to attack our rear, cut off if possible our lines of communication and supply, and compel us, in order to keep these open, so to weaken our force in front as to prevent our attacking them, and enabling them, if they can collect sufficient force, to attack us. Of course, they will dispute every available point on the road, and hold us in check at each place as long as they can, but I do not look for any general engagement till we get to the junction of the Gordonsville and Richmond Road, which is some fifteen miles from the latter place and some forty-five miles from Fredericksburg. The work of repairing the road between Acquia Creek and Fredericksburg progresses very slowly. We may perhaps be favored by weather after getting across the Rappahannock. If the cold weather sets in and freezing the ground makes the roads passable, we may be able to leave Fredericksburg with sufficient provisions and ammunition to push ahead and fight a big battle wherever we may meet the enemy. If we prove victorious, we can at our leisure bring up supplies; and if defeated, we will have little to encumber us on our retreat. I presume this is the project, though I have no knowledge but my own surmises.

CAMP NEAR ACQUIA CREEK, *November 24, 1862.*

Yesterday, being Sunday, after I had penned a few lines to you, I determined I would go and see Burnside and ascertain whether there

was any meaning in his recent action. On my way (for Burnside's headquarters were eight miles off) I accidentally passed Hooker's headquarters, where I at once stopped and found Hooker at home. Hooker was very civil, asked if you had sent me a copy of his letter to Halleck, said he had written another since his return to the army, and that I should have two stars if he could get them. Of course I thanked Hooker very warmly. I spoke then of the object of my visit to headquarters, as Butterfield is in Hooker's grand division, and I found them camping together. Hooker said he thought McClellan had behaved very badly to me in putting Reynolds over me, as he should have found some other place for Reynolds. This of course I expected, for from what passed I evidently saw that all the *entente cordiale*, if any ever existed, was gone between Hooker and McClellan. Hooker spoke very freely; said at one time he expected to have the Army of the Potomac, but that Halleck would not go West, though McClellan was willing to return to Washington as general in chief. Hooker gave one or two hits at Burnside, and rather hinted it might not be very long yet before he was in command. After getting through with my talk with Hooker, I went on to Burnside's headquarters and saw him, luckily finding him alone. I said, playfully, I had come to pick a crow with him. About what? he immediately asked. I told him the state of the case. He promptly assured me he was until that moment perfectly ignorant that I ranked Butterfield; that he agreed with me in all I said; that he would rather have me in command of the corps; that Butterfield's assignment was only temporary; that he would inquire what probability there was of Sedgwick or any other senior officer being sent, and if there was none, and there was a probability of the position being open for any time, that I should certainly have it, as I was the last man he would set aside or slight in any way. I told him I knew there was no intention on his part to slight me, or prejudice my rank, and that I felt satisfied when I came, that he was not aware of the relative rank of Butterfield and myself; indeed, that it was only within a day or two that I had become apprised of the fact that Butterfield had the corps, and that I was his only senior present in command of a division. Hence I had made no written protest and now made no claim to the command; I had simply come to let him know the true state of the case, and should leave all further action to him, confiding in his good feeling always expressed for me. I stayed but a short time, as it was near dark, and I had eight miles to ride home. I came

away, however, quite satisfied there had been no intention to do me any injustice, and that had Burnside known of the true state of the case, he would originally have assigned me to the corps. I do not want it if it is to be for only a few days, to give place to some other senior, and don't mind not being assigned, now that I am satisfied nothing personal was meant. Burnside told me the enemy were evidently concentrating their forces near Fredericksburg, and he thought we should have to fight before we could advance from there. I cannot believe they will risk a great battle, under circumstances so favorable for us, as, if they are defeated, at such a distance from Richmond, they cannot prevent our following them right up to that city. On the other hand, if we are defeated, we have only fifteen miles to get back to our gunboats and supplies. We are now waiting to repair the road from Acquia Creek to Fredericksburg, accumulate supplies and get up our pontoon bridges, when we will cross the river. I have no doubt they will dispute the passage of the river and endeavor to check us as much as possible; but whether they will risk a general battle at or near Fredericksburg remains to be seen.

CAMP NEAR ACQUIA CREEK, *November 25, 1862.*

I have received your letters of the 20th and 22d inst., giving an account of George's¹ departure for his regiment. We have had one or two very fine days; the railroad is repaired some seven miles of the fifteen. A wharf at the landing has been constructed, and trains are carrying supplies as far as the road is open. In the meantime, the enemy are said to be concentrating at Fredericksburg, and the impression gains ground that our passage of the river will be disputed, and that they will give us battle here. Our course is plain—to go ahead—and as we shall have to fight them somewhere, the less distance we have to go the better for us. I am still, however, of the opinion that they will only try to check us at the river, and will not risk a general battle.

CAMP NEAR BROOKS STATION, VA., *November 30, 1862.*

I received this evening your letter of the 28th, enclosing one from George.¹ George's letter is written not only in good spirits, but in the right spirit, and gratified me very much. I trust he will always look upon men and things in the same sensible light, in which case he will avoid much of the trouble that young men are so apt to en-

¹ Son of General Meade.

counter, from thinking those over them are always inferior, and that they know so much better what ought to be done than those whose business it is to decide. I had heard before you wrote that Rush's regiment was ordered here. General Bayard told me the regiment was ordered to his brigade, which is encamped right alongside of me. I said I was glad to hear it, because George had just been commissioned in it and had joined. Bayard, who knows George and all about him, at once said, "I will take him on my staff;" but I said no; I want him to see some service with his company, and learn to command men and be initiated in the details of service, before he goes on the staff. Bayard replied, "You are right." I certainly think it is better for a young officer to serve with his regiment before accepting a staff appointment. Coxe had a letter from his brother dated on Thanksgiving Day, three days after George's. He says they had a dreadful time on the scout (George writes he is ordered on), having to ride seventy-five miles in one day, and that his horse (Coxe's) is completely used up. He says he (C.) is attached to one of the two new companies, which are to be left at Frederick, under Major Morris,¹ the rest of the regiment being ordered to join Franklin immediately. So I shall look for George every day, whom I shall really be glad to see. You must have had, from your account, a most dismal Thanksgiving dinner. I did not know it was Thanksgiving Day till I heard some one complain of not having a turkey for dinner.

CAMP NEAR BROOKS STATION, VA., *December 2, 1862.*

Yesterday I rode over to headquarters and saw General Burnside. As usual, he was very civil and polite. While we were talking he got a telegram announcing the promotion of Reynolds and some half a dozen of brigadiers. He said there were two names on the list ahead of Reynolds; one was Senator Rice, of Minnesota, and the other Brigadier General Berry, of Maine, who has been in service some time. I also understood that only nine appointments to major-generalcies were to be made. I am very glad Reynolds is promoted, for I have always thought he deserved it for his services at Mechanicsville. Reynolds is a man who is very popular and always impresses those around him with a great idea of his superiority.

I could not find out from Burnside what we are likely to do. Some say we are to cross the river immediately, but I see no signs

¹ Robert Morris, Jr., of Philadelphia.

of any such movement. Hooker is very anxious for a move and is talking very freely about our delay. At Burnside's I met Franklin, who invited me to his quarters to eat a turkey. I went over with him and had a very pleasant dinner, and in the evening a quiet game of whist.

CAMP NEAR BROOKS STATION, VA., *December 3, 1862.*

As to McClellan's whitewashing of Meigs, if you will read his letter carefully, you will find he says "he never in any despatch censured General Meigs; he only said his army wanted clothing, and it had not been supplied, and he could not move till it was." Now, this is very ingenious, and is on the principle of the children's expression, "If the shoe pinches," etc. Still, I am willing to admit—and you know I told his mother so last August—McClellan has been *silent too long*. Have you seen the published extracts from the pamphlet of the Prince de Joinville? This is the clearest and most reliable vindication of McClellan's military character which has yet appeared. You do not do me justice in regard to McClellan. I know and see his faults as well as you do, but I cannot for this reason ignore his capacity. I am still of the opinion that he has been badly treated, and no failure on his part to do justice to others will cause me to fail to do justice to him.

December 5, 1862.

I know you will be delighted to see George's¹ handwriting, and on the same sheet with mine. George is looking very well and seems delighted with his position. He gives a very good account of his company and regiment.

We are going to move to-morrow—that is to say, we are ordered to—but as it has been snowing and raining all day, and is snowing now, I fear the condition of the roads will be such that our progress will not be very fast. However, this kind of work is what we are to expect for the future, so we might as well make up our minds to it, and take it as it comes.

The paper received to-day contains General Halleck's official report, which confirms what I previously surmised—that he was responsible for Pope's campaign, which he attempts most lamely to vindicate. McClellan's letter to him from Harrison's Landing is most able, and his reply most impotent.

¹ Son of General Meade.

CAMP NEAR BROOKS STATION, VA., *December 6, 1862.*

I have just sent you a telegram announcing that I had received from Washington notice by telegraph of my promotion. I am truly glad, for your sake as well as my own.

I wrote you a few lines last night, at the end of George's letter. Soon after closing, an order came countermanding our marching, owing to the storm. The weather is very cold to-night, everything freezing hard; but with my stove and buffalo robe, and with the good news of to-day, I bid defiance to the weather.

CAMP NEAR FREDERICKSBURG, VA., *December 9, 1862.*

I have not written for two days, having been occupied with the march, as we had to change camp from our position near Acquia Creek Landing to our present location, near the Rappahannock River. The day we moved camp (yesterday) it was very cold, and the ground frozen hard, so that our teams found no difficulty in coming the ten miles of distance. The day before George's regiment moved over here, when Colonel Smith, commanding, took a wrong road, so that they had to march some twenty miles and did not reach their camp till late at night, and as their wagons did not arrive till the next morning, they had to pass the night, a bitter cold one, in the woods, without supper or blankets. However, they borrowed some axes and made big fires, and had, George said, quite a jolly time. George dined with us to-day, and I was at his camp yesterday. The more I see of the regiment, the better satisfied I am with George's being in it. The officers, as a body, are very much superior to any others (except the regulars), and there is a tone, altogether, which is very marked and gratifying. The regiment has been detailed to do duty with Franklin's grand division and separated from Bayard's command. This they do not like, because it cuts them off in a measure from chances of distinction; but this, I fancy, will be no great objection in your mind. I have seen friend Harding's kind notice of my promotion in the *Inquirer*. I presume you notified him of my telegram. I hope we have not counted our chickens before incubation, but as yet nothing official has reached me.

CAMP NEAR FREDERICKSBURG, VA., *December 10—Midnight.*

To-morrow we shall cross the river, and I think, from all I can learn, may possibly have an engagement with the enemy. You must excuse the brevity of this, as we start at five to-morrow morning.

Keep up your spirits, and don't believe any news but what comes in a reliable shape. Of course no man can go into action without running risks, but our heavenly Father has shown us so much mercy and loving kindness hitherto, that we may pray for its continuance and hope for the best.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA., *December 16, 1862.*

I hope you received my telegram sent on the evening of the 13th inst., announcing my safety.¹ It was out of my power to write, and no mails were permitted to leave the camps, and the telegram I only smuggled through the kindness of Seth Williams. I almost forget when I wrote you last, but I think it was on the 10th inst. The next day we moved down to the river bank and commenced throwing over bridges at two points, one opposite the town, the other about two miles lower down. Franklin's grand division was assigned to the last position. The bridges were finished by the afternoon of the 11th without any opposition at our place, but with much trouble and quite severe loss at the town. On the 12th we crossed. Sumner at the town, Franklin below, and Hooker remaining in reserve. On the 13th it was determined to make an attack from both positions, and the honor of leading this attack was assigned to my division. I cannot give you all the details of the fight, but will simply say my men went in *beautifully*, carried everything before them, and drove the enemy for nearly half a mile, but finding themselves unsupported on either right or left, and encountering an overwhelming force of the enemy, they were checked and finally driven back. As an evidence of the work they had to do, it is only necessary to state that out of four thousand five hundred men taken into action, we know the names of eighteen hundred killed and wounded. There are besides some four hundred missing, many of whom are wounded. All the men agree it was the warmest work the Reserves had ever encountered. I cannot enumerate all the casualties, but among them was poor Dehon,² who fell pierced through the heart and expired almost immediately. Yesterday, under a flag, we found his body, and Coxe has taken it this morning to Washington. I had become very much attached to Dehon for his many excellent qualities, and it does seem as if the good luck that attends me is to be made up in the misfortunes of my staff. I was myself unhurt, although a ball passed

¹ Battle of Fredericksburg, December 11-15, 1862. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 12,653 (O. R.).

² Arthur Dehon, 1st lieutenant 12th Regt. Mass. Vols., and A. D. C. to General Meade.

through my hat so close, that if it had come from the *front* instead of the *side*, I would have been a "goner." The day after the battle, one of their sharpshooters took deliberate aim at me, his ball passing through the neck of my horse. The one I was riding at the time was a public horse, so that Baldy and Blacky are safe. Our attack on the left failed; same result on the right, though with greater loss and without the *éclat* we had, because we drove them for some distance and took some six hundred prisoners. The fact being, as I advised you, they had prepared themselves, in a series of heights covered with woods, where they had constructed redoubts and connected them with rifle pits, so that it was pretty much one fortification. On the town side, the works were so near that our people could make no progress out of the town, they coming immediately under the fire of the works. The 14th and 15th were spent in reconnoissances and deliberations, the result of which was, that last night we had the humiliation to be compelled to return this side of the river; in other words, acknowledge the superior strength of the enemy and proclaim, what we all knew before, that we never should have crossed, with the force we have, without some diversion being made on the James River in our favor. What will be done next I cannot tell. Burnside, I presume, is a dead cock in the pit, and your friend Joe Hooker (fighting Joe) is the next on the list, except that it is said fighting Joe recommended the withdrawal of the army. This operation was most successfully effected before daylight this morning, the enemy not having the slightest intimation until it was too late. I have seen George¹ this morning; his regiment was over here nearly all the time, as there was no use for cavalry. Among the killed was poor Bayard, who was struck by a cannon shot while sitting under a tree. His loss is universally regretted. The day before we crossed, late in the evening, I got your letter of the 6th, and Mr. Stanton's important one dated November 29th, 1862.² It was a very handsome compliment he paid you in transmitting it through you, which means, I should infer, that he would make you a major general if he could, and, that you had made me. Do you think major general sounds any better than brigadier?

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA., December 17, 1862.

I wrote to you yesterday, giving a short account of the battle of the 13th, and my share of the same. You must, however, look to the newspapers for the details, although as usual they seem to ignore the

¹ Son of General Meade.

² Appointing him major-general U. S. Volunteers.

Pennsylvania Reserves, except the New York *Herald*, which I understand says that we ran scandalously at the first fire of the enemy. This is the harder, because I saw the *Herald* correspondent on the field, and he might have known and indeed did know better. What his object in thus falsifying facts was I cannot imagine, but I would advise him not to show himself in our camp if he values his skin, for the men could not be restrained from tarring and feathering him. I believe I told you that yesterday I wrote to Burnside, officially informing him I had received my appointment as major general. To-day I went to see him to ascertain if there was any chance of my slipping away for a few days. He said he would be glad to let me go, but that he proposed to give me the Fifth Corps, now commanded by Butterfield. I told him, in that case I did not want to go. He said the order would have been issued to-day, but that Hooker (in whose grand division the Fifth is) objected to a change of commander in the midst of active operations. I expressed great surprise at this, and referred to Hooker having urged my assignment to his corps on the field of battle, and spoke of the letter he had written to Halleck urging my promotion. Burnside said Hooker had explicitly remarked his opposition was not personal to me, for he considered me one of the most *splendid* soldiers in the army; but it was on the principle of not changing commanders alone that he objected. Burnside finally said he was going up to see Halleck, and unless he ascertained they were going to send someone senior to me, he should put me there, and all that he regretted now was that I had not been in command of it the other day. More than this I could not ask.

I have received your letter by Clem. Barclay. Poor fellow, he did not know till his arrival that his nephew (Dr. B.'s of the navy's son) was killed in Chapman Biddle's regiment. This regiment behaved very well and did good service. You will probably see Alexander Coxe in Philadelphia. I sent him up to Washington with the bodies of Dehon and General Jackson, and told him, after turning them over to their relatives, he might run up to Philadelphia for a few days. He will tell you all about the fight.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, December 20, 1862.

My last letter was dated the 17th instant. Since that day I have been quite busy moving camp, and to-day have been occupied in writing my official report of the recent battle. I am quite anxious

to know what you think and hear of my doings. For my part, the more I think of that battle, the more annoyed I am that such a great chance should have failed me. The slightest straw almost would have kept the tide in our favor. We had driven them for some distance. Lee in his report acknowledges that two brigades of A. P. Hill's division gave way before our attack. All we had to do was to have held our own, to have organized on the hill we had gained, and prepared for their assault till our reinforcements could get up. Instead of that, owing to the death of General Jackson and the wounding of Colonel Sinclair, two brigades were without commanders. It being in the woods, and no one being able to see what was going on around, our men pushed too far, and got right on a large body of the enemy, drawn up in line ready to receive them. Of course they immediately poured in a deadly fire, which staggered my disorganized line, and finally drove it back, with the loss of all it had gained. Had it been otherwise—that is to say, had we held the position gained till our reinforcements came up—I should have been the great hero of the fight, as every other attack had not only failed, but without even the success we could boast of. Well, I suppose it is all for the best, and cannot be helped; but it made me feel worse at the time than if we had been repulsed from the first. Yesterday I went to see Burnside, and found him engaged with the War Investigating Committee of Congress. They were just going to lunch and insisted on my going in. Zach. Chandler, Ben. Wade, John Covode and others were there, all of whom treated me with great distinction, particularly Covode, who claimed me as a Pennsylvanian. Old Chandler inquired very affectionately after *you*, but did not refer to your loyalty. They examined Burnside, Sumner, Hooker and Franklin. What the result will be I don't know, though it is said John Covode affirmed that when he got back he was going to raise a howl, and intimated it would not be against Burnside. Burnside proved that the crossing of the river had been peremptorily ordered from Washington, in the face of his opinion and of the majority of his principal officers. It is understood Halleck says: "This army shall go to Richmond, if it has to go on crutches," which (as over ten thousand cripples were made the other day) seems likely to occur before long. The army are willing enough to go to Richmond, if they could only see the way to get there. Two routes have already been tried this fall—the one by Gordonsville and this by Fredericksburg. Both have failed, and the only one deemed by military men as practicable they obstinately refuse to let us take

—by the Peninsula. In our new camp I have fortunately got a room in a house for my headquarters, so that I am quite comfortable.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA., *December 23, 1862.*

Burnside returned last night from Washington, and to-day he has issued an order placing me in command of the Fifth Army Corps. As this step has not been taken without considerable deliberation, and after consultation with Halleck and the Secretary, I am in hopes that it will be more permanent than my assignment to the First Corps, which lasted only ten days. Burnside says they treated him very well in Washington, which I don't doubt, after seeing his letter to Halleck, wherein he assumes all the responsibility of the recent movement and failure. To-day's Washington *National Republican* comes out openly, denouncing him as incompetent, and demanding he either resign or be removed. I think he would personally have no objection to their removing him, and that he is quite independent of them; willing to remain if they let him alone, but perfectly willing to retire if they desire him to. On my way to Burnside's to-day I called and picked up George,¹ whom I carried with me and introduced him to Burnside. Alexander Coxe got back yesterday, and brought the champagne I ordered, and I immediately sent for Franklin, Smith, Reynolds, Brooks and others to join in celebrating my promotion. Whereupon it was unanimously agreed that Congress ought to establish the grade of lieutenant general, and that they would all unite in having me made one, provided I would treat with such good wine. To-morrow I report to Hooker and take command.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *December 26, 1862.*

After Burnside's return from Washington, which I think took place about the 23d, he issued an order placing me in command of this corps, and directing me to report to General Hooker for that purpose. Accordingly I rode over to Hooker's, on the 24th, and found Butterfield and himself together. Butterfield observed soon after my arrival, that Hooker had just informed him of the order assigning me here. I said "Yes, I have come to report for duty." After a few moments Butterfield left, when Hooker said, "I told Burnside, when he informed me of his intention, that there was no officer in the army I would prefer to you, were the corps without a commander and the question of selection open, but Butterfield having been placed

¹ Son of General Meade.

there and having discharged the duties to my satisfaction, particularly through the late battle, I deemed myself authorized to ask that he might be retained." He made some further remarks about nothing personal being intended, and then turned to his table and issued the order relieving Butterfield, and placing me in command. I returned to my camp, and yesterday moved over here. After the first ice was broken, Butterfield was very civil. He insisted on me eating my Christmas dinner with him, and really had a very handsome entertainment, at which were present all the division and brigade commanders of the corps. After dinner, when they had all left, to give Butterfield a chance, I told him I considered he was fully justified in being disappointed and put out; that if I had been assigned to a corps in disregard of the rank of others, been retained there for a month, gone through a battle and then removed on account of rank, I should myself, as I had experienced in a similar instance, feel very much annoyed and disgusted, and that I considered such feelings natural. Poor Butterfield then opened his heart, I having hit the nail on the head, and told me that when first assigned he went to Burnside and asked whether it was a temporary affair, or not, as he should arrange matters somewhat differently if he was only to hold the position till some senior brigadier or major general came along, and that Burnside assured him *positively* and *distinctly* that it was permanent, and that he should not be disturbed. I said certainly that aggravated the matter, but that he should not hold me responsible; that the mistake and misfortune resulted from the injustice that was done me when he was first assigned, and that General Burnside had told me, *per contra*, that he was ignorant at the time that I ranked him (Butterfield). So to-day I have been installed, and the affair appears to be definitely and satisfactorily settled.

I have received a very handsome letter from Mr. Dehon, thanking me most gratefully for all I have done for his poor boy, and speaking most feelingly of his loss. I really feel for him, for they were wrapped up in each other.

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA., December 30, 1862.

I have received your letters of the 25th and 27th. I saw the piece in the *Inquirer* you refer to, and it was certainly very handsome, as well as the editorial. I trust, however, I shall be able to live up to my *advertisements*. It was very civil in Reynolds to call on you. I am not surprised he did not indulge in any complimentary

remarks about me, because, in the first place, Reynolds is a man who never says or does such things. He is a very good fellow, and I have had much pleasant intercourse with him during the past eighteen months, and considering how closely we have been together and the natural rivalry that might be expected, I think it is saying a good deal for both that we have continued good friends. I fear all hopes of getting home for the present have disappeared. Yesterday we had orders to be in readiness to move at twelve hours' notice, which means, I presume, (though I know nothing) that an advance is contemplated; whether we will cross above or below is a matter of conjecture; or whether we will cross at all. Still, so long as there is a talk of moving, I am kept here. To-day it is raining; a few days' rain will stop all movement.

*To John Sergeant Meade:*¹

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, December 31, 1862.

Your kind letter, dated Christmas, was received yesterday, and I am very much obliged to you for your affectionate remembrance of me. You say truly, we have a great deal to be thankful for, and when we consider the distress and mourning that is around us, our hearts ought to be filled with gratitude for the mercy that has been extended.

John² is very much pleased at George's³ being here, and takes great interest in all that relates to him. George has taken a great fancy to a little black mare I have, belonging to the Government, which he has given me various hints he thought I might buy and present to him, and in this little scheme to diminish my finances to the tune of one hundred and twenty dollars, he has the hearty co-operation of Master John, who regularly informs me every morning he thinks the boy ought to have the black mare.

I have sent George's name to the President for appointment as one of my aides, with the rank of captain.

To-day is my wedding and birthday. To-day I enter on the forty-seventh year of my life and the twenty-third of my wedded existence. I had hoped to spend this day with your dear mother and my darling children, but my promotion to the Fifth Corps and the number of generals that have been sent to testify before the

¹ Son of General Meade.

² General Meade's body-servant.

³ Son of General Meade.

Porter and McDowell courts have prevented my getting away. Should it be decided the army is to go into winter quarters, I may yet have a chance, though I hardly have much hope.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, *January 2, 1863.*

I think I wrote you we were on the eve of a movement, but day before yesterday Burnside got a telegram from the President directing him to suspend preparations and come to Washington. Burnside proceeded there post-haste, and was much astonished by the President telling him that a deputation of his (Burnside's) generals had called on him to protest against any further attempt to cross the river, and asking him to stop Burnside. Burnside asked the names of these officers, which the President declined giving. He then resigned his command, which the President refused to accept. He then made a written protest against Stanton and Halleck, which he read to the President in their presence, stating that neither had the confidence of the people nor the army, and calling on him to remove them and himself. To this they made no reply, and the President would not receive his paper, though he took no offense at its contents. Finding he could get nothing out of any of them, he came back, and thus matters stand. Burnside told me all this himself this morning, and read me his paper, which was right up and down. All this is confidential. God only knows what is to become of us and what will be done. No one in Washington has the courage to say or do anything beyond hampering and obstructing us. Burnside is in favor of advancing, but he is opposed by his principal generals—Sumner, Franklin and Hooker. I had a long talk with Franklin yesterday, who is very positive in his opinion that we cannot go to Richmond on this line, and hence there is no object in our attempting to move on it. I agreed with him on the impracticability of this line, but I did not think for that reason we ought to stand still, because we must move some time or other in some direction, and we are every day growing weaker, without any hope of reinforcements in future. In April, thirty-eight two-year regiments, from New York, and all the nine-month men go out of service. This is a serious consideration. Now, while I am not in favor of reattempting to cross here, yet I was in favor of crossing, if a suitable place could be found above or below, where we could rapidly cross and attack them before

they could get ready to receive us, and I believed we could whip them, and a victory, I did not care under what circumstances, gained, or with what results followed, would be of immense advantage to us. Failing in this, I was for marching down to Urbana, sixty miles below here, where we could cross any time under cover of the gunboats, and from whence we had only twenty miles to West Point, the terminus of the York River Railroad. I agreed with Franklin that the James River was our proper and only base; but as they were determined in Washington that we should not go there, I thought, rather than stand still, we ought to attempt a practicable, though less desirable, line; and should that be forbidden, I was still in favor of making an attempt to whip them, if there was any reasonable probability of our doing so, even though we should not be either able or desirous of following up our victory. So you see I am among the *fire-eaters*, and may perhaps jeopardize my reputation by being too decided. But the fact is, I am tired of this playing war without risks. We must encounter risks if we fight, and we cannot carry on war without fighting. That was McClellan's vice. He was always waiting to have everything just as he wanted before he would attack, and before he could get things arranged as he wanted them, the enemy pounced on him and thwarted all his plans. There is now no doubt he allowed three distinct occasions to take Richmond slip through his hands, for want of nerve to run what he considered risks. Such a general will never command success, though he may avoid disaster.

I send you a piece from a Boston paper on poor Dehon, sent to me by some friend or relative. It does no more than justice to Dehon, who was a gallant officer and clever gentleman. I have felt his loss even more than poor Kuhn's, because, in his case, I was directly instrumental in placing him where he received his death wound, though at the time I sent him I had no idea of the great danger attending his mission. Kuhn, you know, was not with me when he fell, and I have never been able to ascertain whether he fell before or after I was wounded, but think it must have been very near the same time, and that he could not have been very far from me, though I did not see him.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *January 4, 1863.*

I was at general headquarters yesterday, and from what I heard I suspect an advance is not far off. Burnside had just received the telegram announcing the fight at Murfreesboro', and was chafing

under the fear that part of Lee's forces in his front had been detached to help Joe Johnston down there. I told him I had no idea they had gone that far, and thought it more likely they had gone to assist in an attack on Gloucester Point or Suffolk, where we yesterday heard there was fighting.

Hooker has gone up to Washington, for what purpose I do not know, but I guess to see what chance he has for the command, in case Burnside is removed, although he asserts most positively that he will not command this army. I despair more and more of getting off, it is now so late and so much time has passed. Reynolds got back yesterday; he said he had seen you and the children in Philadelphia, but did not have much to say. He is a man of very few words. Baldy Smith has returned, and Franklin is off for a few days.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *January 7, 1863.*

Your assurances of the exalted position I occupy are very grateful. I don't think, however, you need worry yourself about my getting much higher for the present. There are too many ahead of me for my turn to come for some time. To-morrow General Burnside is to review our corps. I sent Coxe up to Washington, who has returned with the materials for a collation. I wish you could be here to see the review. Burnside told me to-day that he had telegraphed to the President for authority to advance, and that if it was refused, he should insist on retiring. I have reason to believe great efforts have been made to displace him, and perhaps this act of his may settle it. At any rate, so long as this question of an advance is open, I cannot get away. I have been very unfortunate, as almost every one has managed to get off for a few days.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 13, 1863.*

Now that I am back I can hardly realize that I spent day before yesterday with you and the dear children. I had a very comfortable journey to Washington, sleeping nearly all the way. I reached Wilards about 7 A. M., breakfasted and walked up to the Bureau to see Woodruff. At 11 presented myself to the court, where I was put on the stand and badgered till 3.30 P. M., the court trying to make me condemn McDowell's tactics and strategy. After court, walked down the street with Markoe Bache to see Margaret,¹ returned to the hotel and dined at 6 P. M., loafed for an hour or two around the

¹ Sister of General Meade.

hotel, and at 9 P. M., left in a special steamer for Acquia Creek, reaching my tent and bed at 3 A. M., this morning. I met at Wilkards, Burnside's Aide, who told me he thought I might venture to remain another day, but as I really had finished all I had to do in Washington, and there was nothing to detain me, I determined to come back. To-day I have been employed seeing Hooker and Burnside, the latter of whom insisted on my dining with him, and was very complimentary on my promptitude in returning, saying he believed I was the only officer in his command that had come back when he was told to do so, and had not overstayed his leave. I could not get any definite information about our movements, though everything looks as if we were going some day to move.

I was treated with great distinction in Washington, and Aleck. Coxe was greatly delighted with the number of inquiries as to who I was, and the very general knowledge of my name, but not of my person. He overheard two gentlemen talking, one of whom said, "What major general is that," to which the other replied, "Meade." "Who is he," said the first, "I never saw him before." "No, that is very likely, for he is one of our fighting generals, is always on the field, and does not spend his time in Washington hotels." I saw of course a good many people, principally army officers.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 15, 1863.*

To-day I have taken a long ride up the river, looking out for suitable crossing places. I could plainly see the enemy's pickets and their camps, and I think it will be very hard to find any place where they are not on the *qui-vive* and looking out for us. On my return I met the pontoon-train going up the river, which is significant, though I did not find in camp any orders, as I expected.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 18, 1863.*

We have been under orders to move, but for some reason or other the final orders have not yet been received. I believe it is Burnside's intention to make another attempt to dislodge the enemy on the opposite side, but profiting by the experience gained in the last effort, he is determined this time to proceed cautiously and securely, to cross the whole army near one place, and not attack until after a close examination of their position he is satisfied he can attack with probability of success. However, the attack when made will be in heavy force, well supported. If this programme is carried out, I be-

lieve we shall be successful, for there is no doubt we have a much larger force than the enemy, and with anything like equal advantages ought to whip them. All this is confidential, though I see the papers for some days past have been announcing our advance. The army is in good condition, though there are those who insist its morale is not good, but of this I see no signs.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 23, 1863.*

I have not written to you for several days, for the reasons that I have had no opportunity, and that I was aware all letters from the camp were stopped in Washington, so that there was no use in writing. On the 19th, in the night, we received orders to move the next day. On the 20th, the whole army moved from their camp to a position four miles up the river, where crossing places had previously been selected. Everything went off very well up to about 8 P. M. of the 20th. The army reached its position. The pontoons, artillery and all other accessories were up in time, and we all thought the next morning the bridges would be thrown over and we should be at it. But man proposes and God disposes. About 9 P. M. a terrific storm of wind and rain set in and continued all night. At once I saw the game was up. The next day the roads were almost impassable; the pontoons, in attempting to get them to the water's edge, stuck on the bank, and a hundred men could not budge them. Instead of six bridges being thrown over by 8 A. M., it was found late in the day that the materials for one only could be got to the water's edge. Burnside visited us, and soon saw the state of the case. Still in hopes something might happen, he directed we should remain in position. All that night, the 21st, and the next day, the 22d, it continued to rain, and the roads to get into such a condition, that early yesterday, the 22d, I had to turn out the whole of my corps, fifteen thousand men, and go to work and bridge with logs, or corduroy, as it is called, nearly the whole road from our camp to the crossing place, eight miles. The men worked cheerfully at this, which was accomplished by early this morning, and Burnside having recalled the army to its old camp, we have been all day getting our artillery back, and to-morrow the infantry will return, thus consuming two days to get back, when it took only a few hours to get there. I never felt so disappointed and sorry for any one in my life as I did for Burnside. He really seems to have even the elements against him. I told him warmly, when I saw him, how sorry I felt, and that

I had almost rather have lost a limb than that the storm should have occurred. He seemed quite philosophical, said he could not resist the elements and perhaps it was as well, for that his movement had been most strongly opposed and some of his generals had told him he was leading the men to a slaughter pen; and I am sorry to say there were many men, and among them generals high in command, who openly rejoiced at the storm and the obstacle it presented. We were very much amused to see in the papers to-day, flaming accounts of our crossing, of the battle, and of Hooker being mortally wounded. I hope you did not attach any importance to these absurd reports, which, when I saw, I feared you might have been anxious. I presumed the truth had been telegraphed and that you would know the storm had frustrated our plans. The plan was based on the presumption that we would take the enemy unawares, at least so far as the place of crossing was concerned, and I believe, but for the storm, we should have succeeded in this. What will be done now I cannot imagine, the mud is at present several feet thick wherever any wagons pass over a road, and if the weather from this time, should at all resemble that of last year, it will effectually stop all operations for two months to come.

I did not see George¹ during our fiasco, though I was at one time bivouacked near a part of his regiment, but his company was not with that part.

Doubleday has been assigned to the Reserves, which is a good thing for me, for now they will think a great deal more of me than before.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, *January 26, 1863.*

We are much excited by rumors of what is going to be done. It is generally believed Burnside is in Washington, though when you go to see him, as I did yesterday, you are informed he is out riding.

This war will never be terminated until one side or the other has been well whipped, and this result cannot be brought about except by fighting. Hence, although I like fighting as little as any man, yet if it has to be done, and I don't see how it can be avoided, I am of Shakespeare's opinion, "if it were done, then 't were well it were done quickly."

I send you three letters which I think you will be interested in reading, and which you may as well keep as mementoes of the war.

¹ Son of General Meade.

The first is from Levi Richards, a private in the Pennsylvania Reserves, who was detailed as a teamster and drove my wagon while I was connected with the Reserves. His letter is spontaneous, he having nothing, as he says, to gain by it, as we are now separated, but it is gratifying to me as an evidence of the opinion entertained of me by the soldiers of my command. The second is from Surgeon Pineo, one of the most accomplished officers of his department, who was under me, while I had command of the First Corps, as medical director. He asked me to recommend him for promotion, which I did, and his letter in reply shows what some officers think of me. The other is from Hon. William Wilkins, formerly judge in Pennsylvania, Senator and Secretary of War. He desires a favor for his grandson, but he is pleased to say I am powerful and in favor, hence his letter indicates in some measure public opinion in regard to me. I send them because, knowing how much you think of me, I know it will gratify you to know that others have a favorable opinion. This may be vanity, but I deem it pardonable in writing to one's wife.

George¹ gave me my spectacles, and the glasses suit exactly, and are truly welcome, for a day or two before we moved, I was on horseback, when a sudden puff of wind carried away the only pair of spectacles I had, and for a few minutes I was in despair, until fortunately my orderly found them. Now I am provided against such accidents.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 26, 1863—9 P. M.*

I wrote you a long letter to-day, little thinking while I was quietly employed writing to you what momentous events were going on immediately around me. After writing to you, I went out to ride for exercise, and on my return at 6 P. M., found an order awaiting me, announcing Major General Hooker as in command of the Army of the Potomac and Major General Meade in command of the Centre Grand Division. I then learned for the first time that this news arrived this morning (Burnside having brought it down from Washington last night), and that he, Burnside, and all his staff had gone off this morning, and that Generals Sumner and Franklin had both been relieved and ordered to Washington. You can readily imagine my surprise at all this, although some such step had been talked about for some time back. As to my commanding a grand division, I consider it a mere temporary arrangement, as either some one of

¹ Son of General Meade.

more rank will be sent, or, what is more likely, the grand division organization broken up altogether, as it was purely an invention of Burnside's, and has not, I think, been considered a good one. You will, doubtless, be anxious to know what I think of these changes. With all my respect, and I may almost say affection, for Burnside—for he has been most kind and considerate towards me—I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he was not equal to the command of so large an army. He had some very positive qualifications, such as determination and nerve, but he wanted knowledge and judgment, and was deficient in that enlarged mental capacity which is essential in a commander. Another drawback was a very general opinion among officers and men, brought about by his own assertions, that the command was too much for him. This greatly weakened his position. As to Hooker, you know my opinion of him, frequently expressed. I believe my opinion is more favorable than any other of the old regular officers, most of whom are decided in their hostility to him. I believe Hooker is a good soldier; the danger he runs is of subjecting himself to bad influences, such as Dan Butterfield and Dan Sickles, who, being intellectually more clever than Hooker, and leading him to believe they are very influential, will obtain an injurious ascendancy over him and insensibly affect his conduct. I may, however, in this be wrong; time will prove.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 28, 1863.*

Your anxiety lest I should be placed in command of the army causes me to smile. Still, I must confess when such men as Gibbon say it is talked about, it really does look serious and alarming; yet, when I look back on the good fortune which has thus far attended my career, I cannot believe so sudden a change for the worse can occur as would happen if I were placed in command. I think, therefore, we may for the present dismiss our fears on that score. General Hooker has been two days in Washington. I am looking anxiously for his return to hear what will be the result. Before he was placed in command he was open-mouthed and constant in his assertions that he did not want to command, and that he would not command unless he was perfectly untrammelled and allowed in every respect to do exactly as he pleased. Now, I am quite confident no such conditions will be acceded to in Washington. Hence, either "Fighting Joe" will have to back down or some one else will be sent to take the command. From my knowledge of friend Hooker, I am inclined to

surmise the former will be the case. But even supposing they give him *carte-blanche*, his position is anything but enviable. This army is in a false position, both as regards the enemy and the public. With respect to the enemy, we can literally do nothing, and our numbers are inadequate to the accomplishment of any result even if we go to the James River. On the other hand, the wise public are under the delusion that we are omnipotent, and that it is only necessary to go ahead to achieve unheard-of success. Of course, under such circumstances, neither Cæsar, Napoleon nor any other mighty genius could fail to meet with condemnation, never mind what he did, and Hooker, I fancy, will find in time his fate in the fate of his predecessors, namely, undue and exaggerated praise before he does anything, and a total absence of reason and intelligence in the discussion of his acts when he does attempt anything, and a denial of even ordinary military qualifications unless he achieves impossibilities. Such being the case, he certainly is not to be envied. I think when his head is cut off, the Administration will try a general of their own kidney, either Fremont, Hunter or some other. Of course, so long as Hooker is absent, I continue in command of the Centre Grand Division, but I am more and more inclined to believe that his visit to Washington will result in the abolition of the grand-division system altogether, and the return to corps alone. I hope I shall retain the Fifth Corps, as it is one of the best, including as it does the regulars.

Humphreys has gone to Washington. I believe I wrote you he behaved with distinguished gallantry at Fredericksburg. It appears that soon after the battle, Burnside told him both the President and Secretary assured him solemnly that Humphreys should be immediately promoted. He now finds a long list sent to the Senate, including such names as Butterfield, Sickles, Berry and others, who have really done nothing, while his name is omitted, and he cannot hear that there is any record in the Department going to show he has ever even been thought of. Under these circumstances he is naturally very indignant. This is all *entre nous*. Just as I had gotten thus far, I heard Hooker had returned, and notwithstanding it is storming and snowing violently, I rode three miles to his headquarters to see him, and have just returned. He seemed in excellent spirits, said they had treated him "en prince" in Washington, and told him he had only to ask and he should have what he wanted. He did not tell me his plans, but intimated that as soon as the weather and the roads permitted he was prepared to try something.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *January 30, 1863.*

A good deal of excitement exists in the army from a report prevailing that the provost marshal of Washington, or rather the head of the detective police in his department, is in the habit of systematically opening the letters received and written by officers. For my part I can hardly credit the statement, and so far as I am concerned am willing it should prove true, for I cannot see how information obtained in this manner can be used against one. I have endeavored to the best of my ability to do my duty, and I have never said a word to any one around me that the most hypercritical could find fault with. In writing to you, however, the wife of my bosom and the only confidential friend I have in the world, I have without doubt at times expressed opinions about men and things, that would not be considered orthodox, but I maintain no government in the world would take advantage of such confidential intercourse to find a man guilty, and I don't believe that any of my letters have ever been opened.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *February 1, 1863.*

Yesterday I received by the flag of truce, a note from Frank Ingraham,¹ who says he is a private in the Twenty-first Mississippi Regiment, now at Fredericksburg. He says Ned² was killed last spring, and that Apolline³ has lost her husband, who died from exposure in service; that his mother and the rest are all well, and wish to be remembered to his yankee relatives.

The weather continues most unfavorable, rain and mud are the order of the day, and in my judgment it will be some months before we can undertake operations of any magnitude. I am afraid, from what I see in the papers, that General Franklin is going to have trouble, for which I shall be truly sorry, for I really like Franklin.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *February 6, 1863.*

To-day an order is issued abolishing grand divisions and returning to the system of corps. I am announced as in command of the Fifth Corps. This is what I expected and accords with my ideas of what is best for the efficiency of the army. Baldy Smith has been relieved of his command and Sedgwick takes his corps—cause unknown, but supposed to be his affiliation with Franklin, and the fear that he would not co-operate with Hooker. This, however, is

¹ Nephew of General Meade.

² Brother of Frank Ingraham.

³ Sister of Frank Ingraham.

mere surmise, I have not seen any one to know or hear what is going on.

Last evening I received orders to send out an expedition this morning, which I did; but it has been storming violently all day, and this afternoon I sent to recall it. The Ninth Corps, which came with Burnside from North Carolina, is not announced in the order published to-day, and I hear it is under orders to move—where it is going, not known, but the probability is that Burnside has asked to have it with him, in case he returns to North Carolina.

The news from Charleston¹ looks very badly, I hope our friend Frailey will come out all right. Stellwagon of the *Mercedita*, if you remember we met at Mrs. Frailey's last summer, the evening I went in there. Our navy has hitherto been so successful, that it seems hard to realize a reverse.

I do not know what to make of the political condition of the country. One thing I do know, I have been long enough in the war to want to give them one thorough good licking before any peace is made, and to accomplish this I will go through a good deal.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *February 13, 1863.*

I have not seen General Hooker for several days, indeed his course towards me is so inexplicable in refusing me leave of absence, and not vouchsafing any reason for it, that I feel indisposed to see him. Besides, I do not like his *entourage*. Such gentlemen as Dan Sickles and Dan Butterfield are not the persons I should select as my intimates, however worthy and superior they may be. I rode over to George's² camp to-day and paid him a short visit. The regiment, since the breaking up of the grand divisions, has been placed under Stoneman, who has command of all the cavalry. This will give them a much better chance of seeing service than when attached to Headquarters, which is a lazy, loafing sort of duty. Have you read General Pope's famous report? I see he says I did my duty in all fidelity to the Government, for which, of course, I am truly grateful.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *February 15, 1863.*

I thought this afternoon I would not have to write to you, for I got a note from Hooker, saying he could spare me for seven days and telling me to apply. I immediately did so, sending in the same application which he had twice refused. At the same time I wrote to

¹ Confederate gun-boats under Com. Ingraham broke the Federal blockade at Charleston, S. C.

² Son of General Meade.

him, that I did not desire to go, if there was the slightest reason to believe I should be wanted. It will be too much happiness to get home for a few days and be with you and the dear children.

I have had an application from young Jay,¹ of New York, to come upon my staff, as an extra aide. He was appointed an additional aide-de-camp at the time the law authorized such appointments, and has been serving with General Morrell. That officer having been deprived of his command, Captain Jay has applied to me. I told him, if the War Department would assign him, I should be glad to have him.

BUREAU TOP. ENG. (WASHINGTON, D. C.), *February 26, 1863.*

The train never reached this place until ten o'clock, instead of six-thirty as due. In consequence I missed the boat. As there is none till to-morrow morning at 8 A. M., thus detaining me here all day. This is annoying, because I wished to set the example of a prompt and punctual return within the time allowed me, whereas now I shall be one day behind time, and this is the more disagreeable because there is a report in town that the enemy's cavalry have appeared in force this side of the Rappahannock. This is only a raid, as they cannot possibly be so foolish as to attempt any advance this side of the river, at this season of the year. The first person I met at the hotel was Cram, and I am going to dine with him to-day. I next met Sykes, who is up here on a court-martial. I am now writing a few lines to give you the news, am going to see Mrs. Turnbull and then shall dine with Cram.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, *February 27, 1863.*

I wrote you a few lines yesterday from Major Woodruff's office, advising you of my detention in Washington.

I met hundreds of people whom I knew, such as Generals Cadwalader, McCall, Hartsuff and others. I had seen Hudson (McClellan's aide) in the morning, and he asked me to come at six and dine with the general. I declined the invitation on the ground of previous engagements, but said I would drop in after dinner. As it was past eight o'clock when I got back, I went in to the private parlor where McClellan was dining, and found a party of some dozen or more, all officers but one, a Mr. Cox, Democratic member of Congress from Ohio. Among the party were Andrew Porter, Sykes,

¹ William Jay.

Buchanan, General Van Allen and others. McClellan received me with much distinction and seated me alongside of himself, and asked very kindly after you and the children, etc. The subject of conversation at the table was general, and referred principally to military matters and pending acts of legislation. My friend ——, who doubtless had heard of my confirmation and was in consequence disgusted, said he heard I was to be given an *Army Corps of Niggers*. I laughingly replied I had not been informed of the honor awaiting me, but one thing I begged to assure ——, that if the niggers were going into the field and really could be brought heartily to fight, I was ready to command them, and should prefer such duty to others that might be assigned me. As this was a fair hit at ——'s position, it silenced him, and I heard nothing further about commanding niggers. After spending an hour in pleasant chat, I withdrew, and meeting Cram, we spent the night till near twelve o'clock, talking and walking about among the crowd in the hotel. This morning I left at eight o'clock and reached here about one P. M., being half a day behind my time. On the wharf at Acquia Creek I met Reynolds, on his way out, having just received his leave, and having been, as I expected, awaiting my return to have his granted.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, March 7, 1863.

Before this reaches you, you will have seen Alexander Coxe, who left this morning for home. I am most truly sorry to lose him, for he has not only rendered himself most useful to me, but has attached himself to me as a friend, from his manly character and social qualities. I sincerely hope he will be benefited by rest and medical treatment at home, and will be able to return.

Captain Jay has joined me, and seems quite a clever gentleman. We have also had at our mess John Williams, who has been taken away from Ricketts and ordered to report to this army for duty, but who has not yet been assigned to any general.

The bill amalgamating the two corps of Engineers has passed, so the old Topographical Corps is defunct, and I shall have the honor of being borne on the register as a Major of Engineers. The bill makes one brigadier general (Totten), four colonels (of which Bache will be one), ten lieutenant colonels, twenty majors (of whom I shall be the tenth), thirty captains, thirty first lieutenants and ten second lieutenants. It don't make much difference to me, if the war lasts as long as I expect it to and I survive it.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *March 12, 1863.*

You will see by the papers that we have all been confirmed, with the dates of our appointment.

You have never mentioned Reynolds in your letters. He has been off on ten-days' leave, and I presumed he would be in Philadelphia. Did you hear of his being there? I have not seen him since his return to ask. I was invited to his headquarters yesterday to dine, it being the anniversary of the organization of the First Corps; and as I had for a time commanded the corps, and also a division in it, I was honored with an invitation. The dinner was given by the staff.

This evening Captain Magaw, of the navy, with his mother, wife and a young-lady friend, made their appearance at headquarters, and asked hospitality. He commands the gun-boat flotilla in the Potomac. His wife is quite a sweet, pretty woman, is the daughter of a navy officer, and was born at Pensacola when my sister, Mrs. Dallas, was there, and is named after her and Margaret. The young men on the staff turned out with alacrity and fitted up a tent in which they are quite comfortable.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *March 13, 1863.*

I am glad you went to Professor Cresson's experiments on the polarization of light, which must have been very interesting, even though unintelligible!

Captain Magaw and ladies left us to-day. Though we were utterly unprepared for such visitors, we managed to make them quite comfortable, and they left delighted. Yesterday I put the ladies in an ambulance and mounted Magaw on Baldy, and we went over and took a look at Fredericksburg, and afterwards called on Hooker. The General was, however, absent at a grand wedding which took place yesterday in camp, followed last night by a ball, and I understand another ball is given to-night by General Sickles. Not being honored with an invitation to these festivities, I did not go.

*To Mr. John Sergeant Meade:*¹

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *March 15, 1863.*

I am obliged to go up to Washington to-day, to appear before the "Committee on the Conduct of the War." I have no idea what they

¹ Son of General Meade.

want me for, but presume it is in relation to the Fredericksburg battle, and that my being called is due to the testimony of General Burnside, who has perhaps referred to me in his statement. I am very sorry I have been called, because my relations and feelings towards all parties are and have been of the most friendly character, and I shall be sorry to become involved in any way in the controversies growing out of this affair.

I have only seen George¹ once since my return; the weather and roads have been so bad that neither of us could get to the camp of the other. The regiment has been very highly complimented by General Stoneman. One squadron has been armed with carbines, and it is expected that in a short time the whole regiment will be thus equipped and the *turkey-driving implement*² abandoned.

I am completely fuddled about politics, and am afraid the people are very much demoralized. I trust one thing or another will be done. Either carry on the war as it ought to be, with overwhelming means, both material and personal, or else give it up altogether. I am tired of half-way measures and efforts, and of the indecisive character of operations up to this time. I don't know whether these sentiments will be considered disloyal, but they are certainly mine; with the understanding, however, that I am in favor of the first, namely, a vigorous prosecution of the war with all the means in our power.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *March 17, 1863.*

I returned to-day from Washington. I went up day before yesterday, the 15th, arriving in Washington about 7 P. M. I went to Willard's, where, as usual, I saw a great many people. Finding Burnside was in the house, I sent up my name and was ushered into his room, where I found himself and Mrs. Burnside, the latter a very quiet, lady-like and exceedingly nice personage, quite pretty and rather younger than I expected to see. Burnside was very glad to see me, and we had a long talk. Among other things he read me a correspondence he had had with Franklin. Franklin had called his attention to the letter which appeared in the *Times*, said this was known to be written by Raymond, the editor, and it was generally believed his information was derived either from Burnside himself or

¹ Son of General Meade.

² Lance carried by some cavalry regiments.

some of his staff. Hence this letter was considered authority, and as it did him, Franklin, great injustice, he appealed to his, Burnside's, magnanimity to correct the errors and give publicity to his correction. Burnside replied that he had not read the article till Franklin called his attention to it; that he was not responsible for it, nor was he aware that any of his staff had had any part in its production. Still, he was bound to say that in its facts it was true; that as to the inferences drawn from these facts, he had nothing to say about them and must refer him to Raymond, the reputed author. Several letters had passed, Franklin trying to get Burnside to (as he, Burnside, expressed it) whitewash him. This Burnside said he was not going to do; that Franklin must stand on his own merits and the facts of the case; that he had never made any accusation against him, except to say that the crossing of the river, being against his, Franklin's, judgment, he thought Franklin had been wanting in a zealous and hearty co-operation with his plans. That about the time my attack failed, hearing from one of his, Burnside's, staff officers, just from the field, that Franklin was not attacking with the force and vigor he ought to, he immediately despatched him an order "*directing him to attack with his whole force if necessary,*" which order he assumed the responsibility of not executing, and he must now take the consequences, if blame was attached to him for it.

The next morning I went up to the Capitol, to the committee room, and found only the clerk present. He said the committee had been awaiting me some days; that Senators Chandler and Wade were the only two members present, and now down town; that he would hunt them up, and have them at the room by three o'clock, if I would return at that hour. At three I again presented myself to the committee, and found old Ben Wade, Senator from Ohio, awaiting me. He said the committee wished to examine me in regard to my attack at Fredericksburg. I told him I presumed such was the object in summoning me, and with this in view I had brought my official report, which I would read to him, and if he wanted any more information, I was prepared to give it. After hearing my report, he said it covered the whole ground, and he would only ask me one or two questions. First, was I aware that General Burnside, about the time of my attack, had ordered General Franklin to attack with his whole force? I answered, "At the time of the battle, No; indeed, I only learned this fact yesterday evening, from General Burnside himself." Secondly, what, in my judgment, as a military man, would have been the

effect if General Franklin had, when my attack was successful, advanced his whole line? I said I believed such a movement would have resulted in the driving back of the enemy's right wing; though it would, without doubt, have produced a desperate and hard-contested fight; but when I reflected on the success that attended my attack, which was made with less than ten thousand men (supports and all), I could not resist the belief that the attack of fifty thousand men would have been followed by success. This was all he asked, and except the last question, the answer to which was a mere matter of opinion, I don't think any one can take exception to my testimony. My conversations with Burnside and Wade satisfied me that Franklin was to be made responsible for the failure at Fredericksburg, and the committee is seeking all the testimony they can procure to substantiate this theory of theirs. Now, Franklin has, first, his orders, as received from Burnside, and then the fact that the execution of these orders was entrusted to Reynolds, for his defense. Before the committee, of course, he will not be heard, but after their report comes out, it will be incumbent on him to notice their statements and demand an investigation. I feel very sorry for Franklin, because I like him, and because he has always been consistently friendly to me.

After returning from the Capitol, I dined with General and Mrs. Burnside and Parke. Parke said he was about being left off the list of major generals, when Burnside's opportune arrival saved him, Halleck giving as a reason that he had exercised no command since his appointment. Burnside, however, had his name sent in, and now he is going to supersede Baldy Smith and take command of the Ninth Corps, which is to accompany Burnside in his new command, to which he, Burnside, expects to be ordered in a few days.

The best piece of news I learned when in Washington was that the President was about issuing his proclamation putting in force the conscription law, and ordering immediately a draft of five hundred thousand men. Only let him do this, and enforce it and get the men, and the North is bound to carry the day.

I sometimes feel very nervous about my position, they are knocking over generals at such a rate. Among others, Wright, who was my *beau ideal* of a soldier, and whom I had picked out as the most rising man, has had his major-generalcy and his command both taken away from him, because he could not satisfy the extremists of Ohio (anti-slavery) and those of Kentucky (pro-slavery), but tried by a moderate course to steer between them.

Did I tell you the old Reserves had subscribed fifteen hundred dollars to present me with a sword, sash, belt, etc.? It is expected they will be ready about the close of the month, when I am to go, if possible, to their camp near Washington to receive them.

FALMOUTH, VA., *March 21, 1863.*

I had seen in the papers a glowing account of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," which must have been a great treat. There is nothing I feel so much the deprivation of as hearing good music, and I was very sorry that there was no opportunity to indulge myself while in Philadelphia.

We have literally nothing new or exciting in camp. Averill's brilliant cavalry foray has been the camp talk. The enemy, through Richmond papers, admit they were whipped and believe it to be the commencement of Hooker's campaign, and already talk of the probable necessity of Lee's having to fall back nearer Richmond. This confirms what we have suspected, that their force opposite to us had been much reduced, and that when we pressed them they would retire. There is not much chance of doing this at present, however. Yesterday it snowed all day, and to-day it is raining, so that our roads are again, or will be, in a dreadful condition.

FALMOUTH, VA., *March 29, 1863.*

I received yesterday your letter of the 26th. The same mail brought me a letter from Franklin. It is evident from Franklin's letter that my surmise was correct, that he had taken it into his head that I had been talking to Burnside and furnishing him with data for the controversy. I don't intend to quarrel with Franklin if I can help it, because I feel that in all this war he has shown more real regard for me and appreciation for me than any other man. I have never had any official relations with Franklin, till Fredericksburg, and I know that he has on numerous occasions referred to me as one who has not been advanced in proportion to his merits. Besides this feeling, selfish to be sure, my judgment is that Burnside is making a mistake in holding Franklin responsible for the disaster at Fredericksburg. Franklin may be chargeable with a want of energy, with failing, without reference to orders, to take advantage of a grand opportunity for distinction, with, in fact, not doing *more* than he was strictly required to do; but it is absurd to say he failed

to obey, or in any way obstructed the prompt execution of his orders; that is, so far as I know them.

Burnside says he sent him orders about the middle of the day *to attack with his whole force*. Franklin, I understand, denies having received any such orders. Moreover, Baldy Smith, I hear, has sworn that a day or two before Franklin was relieved, Burnside told him (Baldy Smith) that he was going to give up the command of the army and urge the President to put Franklin in his place. This seems very inconsistent with his subsequent course, as there is no doubt Franklin's command was taken away from him on the representations of Burnside. My position, with my friendly feelings for both, is not only peculiar but embarrassing.

We had some grand races day before yesterday, gotten up by Birney. I went over there and met Governor Curtin. He returned with me and inspected several of the Pennsylvania regiments in my command, making little speeches to each.

FALMOUTH, VA., March 30, 1863.

I am truly glad to hear Franklin called to see you. I am sure you will bear testimony to the respect and good feeling I have always expressed towards Franklin, and my earnest desire to avoid being drawn into the controversy between himself and Burnside. I think Franklin missed a great chance at Fredericksburg, and I rather infer from his letter that *he* thinks so now; but I have always said he was hampered by his orders and a want of information as to Burnside's real views and plans. A *great* captain would have cast them aside and assumed responsibility. At the same time I must say that he knew and I know that if he had failed, then his going beyond his orders would prove *utter ruin*.

Deserters from the other side say the men are really suffering from the want of sufficient food, but that their spirit is undaunted, and that they are ready to fight. The *morale* of our army is better than it ever was, so you may look out for tough fighting next time.

FALMOUTH, VA., April 5, 1863.

Yesterday I received yours of the 2d instant, announcing you had been to Bailey's to see my sword. I saw the item in the *Inquirer* you allude to, and was not a little taken down by another in the next column, in which the presentation fever was most justly inveighed against. I did all I could to prevent anything being given

to me, and on several occasions when I was approached to know what I would like to have, I always refused to take anything, and earnestly requested as a personal favor to have the thing stopped. This last affair was gotten up after I had left the division, and the first I knew of it was that the sword had been ordered and would soon be ready for presentation. There is to be a grand jollification at Willard's, I hear, on the occasion, when the Governor and divers other big-bugs will be present to gas and make me feel uncomfortable. I would give a good deal to escape this ordeal, and am in hopes we shall be on the move before they get ready. I would much prefer the men giving their money to their wives, or, if they are not so blessed, to the widows and orphans that the war has made. I see by the *Inquirer* of yesterday that the 18th instant is the day appointed for the presentation, but I rather think that by that date I shall have other work on hand.

Some one has sent me a copy of the *Evening Journal* with Wilkeson's letter about Birney in it.

FALMOUTH, VA., April 9, 1863.

I have omitted writing for a day or two, as I have been very much occupied in the ceremonies incidental to the President's visit. I think my last letter told you he arrived here on Sunday, in the midst of a violent snow storm. He was to have had a cavalry review on that day, but the weather prevented it. The next day, Monday, the cavalry review came off; but notwithstanding the large number of men on parade, the weather, which was cloudy and raw, and the ground, which was very muddy, detracted from the effect greatly. Orders were given for an infantry review the next day (Tuesday). I was invited on this day (Monday) to dine with General Hooker, to meet the President and Mrs. Lincoln. We had a very handsome and pleasant dinner. The President and Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Bates, Secretary of the Interior, a Dr. Henry, of Colorado, who accompanied the President, Mrs. Stoneman, wife of Major General Stoneman, besides the corps commanders, constituted the party. The next day, owing to the ground not being in condition, the infantry review was postponed; but the President did me the honor to visit my camps and inspect them, and I believe (leaving out the fatigue) passed a very pleasant day. Yesterday (Wednesday) we had the grand infantry review, there being out four corps, or over sixty thousand men. The review passed off very well indeed. The

day, during the early part of it, was not favorable, being cloudy and raw, but after noon the sun came out and rendered everything more cheerful. Mrs. Carroll and Mrs. Griffin and the two Misses Carroll, together with two other young ladies, having come down to General Griffin's, I was invited to meet them at dinner, which I did yesterday evening, and had a very pleasant time. So you see we are trying to smooth a little the horrors of war. I saw George¹ the day of the cavalry review. He told me he was to have a leave that day, so that he will undoubtedly be there when this reaches you.

The day I dined with Hooker, he told me, in the presence of Mr. Bates, Secretary of the Interior, that he (Hooker) had told the President that the vacant brigadiership in the regular army lay between Sedgwick and myself. I replied that I had no pretensions to it, and that if I were the President I would leave it open till after the next battle. The next day, when riding through the camp, Hooker said the President had told him he intended to leave this position open till after the next fight.

You have seen the report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. It is terribly severe upon Franklin. Still, I took occasion when I had a chance to say a good word for Franklin to the President, who seemed very ready to hear anything in his behalf, and said promptly that he always liked Franklin and believed him to be a true man. The President looks careworn and exhausted. It is said he has been brought here for relaxation and amusement, and that his health is seriously threatened. He expresses himself greatly pleased with all he has seen, and his friends say he has improved already.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, *April 11, 1863.*

The President has now reviewed the whole army, and expresses himself highly delighted with all he has seen. Since our review, I have attended the other reviews and have been making myself (or at least trying so to do) very agreeable to Mrs. Lincoln, who seems an amiable sort of personage. In view also of the vacant brigadiership in the regular army, I have ventured to tell the President one or two stories, and I think I have made decided progress in his affections. By-the-by, talking of this vacancy, I have been very much gratified at the congratulations I have received from several distinguished general officers on the prominence that has been given my

¹ Son of General Meade.

name in connection with this appointment. The other day, Major General Stoneman came up to me and said he was very glad to hear I was so much talked of in connection with this vacancy; that he hoped I would get it, and that he believed the voice of the army would be in my favor. Coming as this does from those who are cognizant of my services, some of whom are themselves candidates, I cannot but regard it as most complimentary and gratifying, and I am sure it will please you. Stoneman also told me that, hearing I had a boy in the Lancers, he had sent for him and introduced him to Mrs. Stoneman. Stoneman also spoke very handsomely of the Lancers, and said he intended they should have full chance to show what they were made of.

FALMOUTH, VA., *April 12, 1863.*

I feel very sad when I think of young Dehon and Hamilton Kuhn, both so full of life and promising so much; to be cut off in the way they were, is truly mournful, and I feel sometimes as if I was individually responsible, and in some measure the cause of the misfortune of their friends.

I have had another hard day's work. No sooner had the President left, than a Major General Follarde, of the Swiss army, comes down here, with orders to Hooker to show him every attention, and as he does not speak English, and I have some pretensions to speaking French, Hooker turned him over to me, and I have, to-day, been taking him all through my camps and showing him my command. He seems like all foreign officers of rank, intelligent and educated. He expressed himself delighted and wonder-struck with all he saw, and says our troops will compare favorably with the best troops in Europe, and he has seen them all. If he goes back to Philadelphia, I will give him a letter to you, for I think he will interest you.

I note what you say of General Hooker. I think he will outlive that scandal, for it most certainly is a scandal. Whatever may have been his habits in former times, since I have been associated with him in the army I can bear testimony of the utter falsehood of the charge of drunkenness.

I spoke to the President when here about Franklin, and endeavored to convince him that the whole affair turned on a misapprehension, Burnside thinking he was saying and ordering one thing and Franklin understanding another. I *know* that Franklin did not, nor did any of those around him, believe or understand that Burn-

side intended our attack for the *main attack*, which Burnside now avers was always his intention.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, *April 14, 1863.*

Yesterday I received a letter asking me to appoint a day to receive the sword, etc. I referred it to General Hooker, who replied that it was entirely out of the question, my being absent at this time, and recommending the postponement of the presentation, which I accordingly wrote to the committee. I am just as well satisfied, for I looked with great horror at the prospect of being made a lion, and having to roar for the benefit of outsiders. I trust now they will come quietly down here, make the presentation, and let me send the sword back to you, for it is too precious to carry in the field.

I have been busy all day making preparations for the march.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *April 17, 1863.*

I regret to see you are in bad spirits and take so much to heart our apparent reverses. The affair at Charleston was pretty much as I expected, except I did think the ironclads would be able to pass Sumter and get at the town. I did not expect this would give us the place, or that they could reduce the batteries. They never have yet reduced any batteries of consequence, except those at Port Royal and Fort Donelson, but they have proved their capacity to run by them and stand being shot at, which I think they did in an eminent degree at Charleston. I see some of the papers are disposed to criticise and find fault with duPont, but I have just read a vigorous defense of him in the New York *Tribune*, so he is all right. You must not be so low-spirited. War is a game of ups and downs, and we must have our reverses mixed up with our successes. Look out for "Fighting Joe's" army, for the grand reaction in our favor. A big rain storm we had on the 14th has kept us quiet for awhile, but Joe says we are to do great things when we start.

The great lady in the camp is the Princess Slam Slam, who is quite a pretty young woman. The Prince Slam Slam has a regiment in Sigel's corps.

April 18, 1863.

To-day is fine and beautiful, and if we only have a continuance of such weather, we shall soon be on the move. I suppose the sooner we get off the better. General Hooker seems to be very sanguine of

success, but is remarkably reticent of his information and plans; I really know nothing of what he intends to do, or when or where he proposes doing anything. This secrecy I presume is advantageous, so far as it prevents the enemy's becoming aware of our plans. At the same time it may be carried too far, and important plans may be frustrated by subordinates, from their ignorance of how much depended on their share of the work. This was the case at Fredericksburg. Franklin was not properly advised, that is to say, not fully advised, as to Burnside's plan. I am sure if he had been so advised, his movements would have been different.

I suppose you have seen Jeff Davis's proclamation on the subject of food. It undoubtedly is a confession of weakness, but we should be very careful how we allow ourselves to be led astray by it. Not a single exertion on our part should be relaxed, not a man less called out than before. We might as well make up our minds to the fact that our only hope of peace is in the complete overpowering of the military force of the South, and to do this we must have immense armies to outnumber them everywhere. I fear, however, that this plain dictate of common sense will never have its proper influence. Already I hear a talk of not enforcing the conscription law. Certainly no such efforts are being made to put the machinery of the law into motion as would indicate an early calling out of the drafted men. In the course of the next month and the one ensuing, all the two-year and nine-month men go out of service. Of the latter class there were called out three hundred thousand. How many are in service I don't know. I do know, however, that this army loses in the next twenty days nearly twenty-five thousand men, and that I see no indication of their being replaced. Over eight thousand go out of my corps alone. These facts have been well-known at Washington for some time past, and pressed upon the attention of the authorities, and perhaps arrangements unknown to me have been made to meet the difficulty.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., April 20, 1863.

I can see by the public journals that the navy are in the affair at Charleston about to imitate the bad example of the army by squabbling among themselves after a battle with greater energy than they display fighting the enemy. DuPont will undoubtedly have to bear the brunt of the failure at Charleston, but as I see the *Tribune* most warmly and energetically espouses his cause, I presume he is all

safe. I never had any idea the ironclads would be able to do much more than they did. They are simply able to stand fire, but have no more offensive power, indeed not as much as ordinary vessels of war.

I see Seymour has been sent by Hunter to endeavor to have countermanded the order sending the ironclads to the Mississippi. This order, if ever given, was in my judgment very injudicious, for these vessels will be of no use on that river in reducing the works of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. The only service they can be put to there would be to patrol the river between the two places, and prevent supplies to the rebels from the Red River Country.

Yesterday the Richmond papers announced the fall of Suffolk, and we were all pretty blue; but this morning we have a telegram from General Peck reporting that he has stormed and carried a battery of six guns that the enemy had built, and had captured a portion of an Alabama regiment that was defending it. This is great news, not so much for the actual amount of the success, as for the facts—first, that it is the reverse of what the rebels had reported, and, second, because it is the first time in this war that our troops have carried a battery in position at the point of the bayonet, an example, I trust, will be speedily and often imitated by us.

Day before yesterday, I was astonished at receiving a very beautiful bouquet of flowers, which had attached to it a card on which was written, "With the compliments of Mrs. A. Lincoln." At first I was very much tickled, and my vanity insinuated that my *fine appearance* had taken Mrs. L's eye and that my fortune was made. This delusion, however, was speedily dissolved by the orderly who brought the bouquet inquiring the road to General Griffin's and Sykes's quarters, when I ascertained that all the principal generals had been similarly honored.

I understand George¹ joined his regiment up the river, the day after he arrived. He went up in a violent storm.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., April 22, 1863.

You don't seem to like my Loyal League letter, or rather you seem to depreciate my writing at all. I could not decline to answer the invitation extended to me, and to decline simply on the ground of public duties would have been refusing to give my views, which undoubtedly was the object of the invitation, as no one could have sup-

¹ Son of General Meade.

posed I could attend. The letter I wrote was carefully worded, to avoid anything like a partisan complexion. I said nothing but what I am willing to stand up to. I am in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and am opposed to any separation of government in what was, is, and should be the United States. I stated distinctly that I subscribed to the platform because it was *national* and not partisan. It is impossible to satisfy all parties; the only thing you can do is to give none a reason for claiming you as their own.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *April 25, 1863.*

George's¹ panniers arrived yesterday. They are certainly very elegant affairs and I presume Master George got his pay in Washington to enable him to indulge in such luxuries. I have for my use two champagne baskets covered with canvas, but young lieutenants are far ahead of generals now-a-days.

The extraordinarily bad weather continues. It seems as if it would never stop raining, and until it does, we must remain quiet. I cannot hear anything of the movements of the cavalry. The last I heard they were up the Rappahannock, detained by the rains, and I take it for granted they are there still.

I join most heartily with you in prayers and wishes for this terrible war to be brought to a close; but I fear our prayers and wishes will avail but little. If I could only see the country alive to the magnitude of the war, and efforts being made to exert and use the superior resources in the way they should be employed, I might have some hopes that the war might be terminated by our success. Let us hope matters will turn out better than we have a right to expect. War is a game of chances and accidents. A little success on our part will have a great influence to bring things to a right condition, and I think the spirit of this army is to try hard to be successful.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *April 26, 1863.*

Hooker seems very confident of success, but lets no one into his secrets. I heard him say that not a human being knew his plans either in the army or at Washington. For my part I am willing to be in ignorance, for it prevents all criticism and faultfinding in advance. All I ask and pray for is to be told explicitly and clearly what I am expected to do, and then I shall try, to the best of my ability, to accomplish the task set before me. This afternoon, while

¹ Son of General Meade.

at headquarters, I saw the arrival of Mr. Seward with several ladies, and three or four of the foreign Ministers, from Washington. I was not introduced to them, as I was on business and in a hurry to get home.

I have been riding all day and am a little fatigued.

April 30, 1863.

The papers will of course tell you the army has moved. I write to tell you that there is as yet but a little skirmishing; we are across the river and have out-manœvered the enemy, but are not yet out of the woods.

May 2, P. M.

We have had no great fighting as yet, though Sykes's division, of my corps, had quite a skirmish yesterday. It is doubtful what the enemy are going to do, but many believe they are evacuating.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *May 7, 1863.*

I reached here last evening, fatigued and exhausted with a ten days' campaign, pained and humiliated at its unsatisfactory result, but grateful to our heavenly Father that, in His infinite goodness, He permitted me to escape all the dangers I had to pass through.¹ The papers will give you all the details of the movement, so that I shall confine myself to a general account of my own doings. General Hooker's plan was well conceived and its early part well executed. It was briefly thus: A portion of the army were to make a forced march, cross the Rappahannock so high up as to preclude opposition, cross the Rapidan at the lower fords, drive away the defenders of the works placed at the crossings of the Rappahannock nearest to Fredericksburg, and when one of these was opened, the rest of the army was to join the advanced corps, be concentrated, and push the enemy away from Fredericksburg.

I have advised you that on Monday, the 27th ulto., my corps, the Fifth, together with the Eleventh and Twelfth, left camp and reached Kelly's Ford on the 28th. That night and early next morning we crossed the Rappahannock, the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps moving on one road to Germanna Ford and I on another to Ely's ford, of the Rapidan. These fords were reached and crossed by the

¹ Battle of Chancellorsville, May 3-5, 1863. Federal loss, killed, wounded, and missing, 12,145 (O. R.).

evening of the 29th. On the 30th we advanced and concentrated at Chancellorsville, a small place on the plank road from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville, and distant some ten miles from Fredericksburg. In this movement we uncovered the United States ford and established communication with our left wing opposite Fredericksburg; thus far the movement was successful. On the 1st inst. two more corps were brought over to Chancellorsville, and the Fifth and Twelfth corps advanced from Chancellorsville towards Fredericksburg; but just as we reached the enemy we were *recalled*. On our retiring the enemy attacked Sykes's division of my corps and we had a smart fight till dark. The next day, May 2d, the enemy attacked in force, and after a day's hard fighting, owing to the bad behavior of a portion of our troops, the Eleventh Corps, we had to fall back and draw in our lines.

I ought to have mentioned that, simultaneously with our crossing the Rappahannock above, Sedgwick and Reynolds crossed below Fredericksburg, and after occupying the attention of the enemy, so soon as we were established at Chancellorsville, they were withdrawn, and Reynolds joined us on the 30th. When the force of the enemy was perceived, Sedgwick was ordered to recross at Fredericksburg and attack in their rear, which he did, on the 2d inst. On the 3d we had a very heavy fight, in which we held our own, but did not advance, awaiting Sedgwick's operations. On the 4th remained quiet, and in the evening learned that Sedgwick was held in check by superior forces, and his position critical. The enemy not attacking us on the 5th, as we hoped, and finding him too strong to attack without danger of sacrificing the army in case of defeat, Hooker determined to withdraw to this side of the river, which we did without pursuit, on the night of the 5th.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 8, 1863.

When I last wrote I could get no definite information of George's¹ whereabouts, but to-day Captain Newhall² has returned to headquarters and reports the cavalry all back across the Rappahannock, except two regiments that continued on and have arrived at Yorktown, having succeeded in destroying several bridges on the railroads from hence and Gordonsville to Richmond. Unfortunately our withdrawal across the Rappahannock will prevent advantage being taken

¹ Son of General Meade.

² Frederick C. Newhall, of Philadelphia, aide-de-camp to General Pleasanton.

of the cavalry success, as they will now have time to repair damages before we can get at them again.

Just after closing my letter yesterday I was summoned to headquarters, where I found the President and General Halleck. The former said he had come down to enquire for himself as to the condition of affairs and desired to see corps commanders. He and Halleck spent a couple of hours, took lunch, and talked of all sorts of things, but nothing was said of our recent operations, or any reference made to the future, nor was any corps commander called on for an opinion. The President remarked that the result was in his judgment most unfortunate; that he did not blame any one—he believed every one had done all in his power; and that the disaster was one that could not be helped. Nevertheless he thought its effect, both at home and abroad, would be more serious and injurious than any previous act of the war. In this I agree with him; and when it comes to be known that it might and should have been avoided, I think the country will hold some one responsible. My conscience and record are fortunately clear. I opposed the withdrawal with all my influence, and I tried all I could, on Sunday morning, to be permitted to take my corps into action, and to have a general battle with the whole army engaged, but I was *overruled* and censured for sending in a brigade of Humphreys's, which I did in spite of orders to the contrary. General Hooker has disappointed all his friends by failing to show his fighting qualities at the pinch. He was more cautious and took to digging quicker even than McClellan, thus proving that a man may talk very big when he has no responsibility, but that it is quite a different thing, acting when you are responsible and talking when others are. Who would have believed a few days ago that Hooker would withdraw his army, in opposition to the opinion of a majority of his corps commanders? yet such is absolutely and actually the case.

My corps did not have much of a chance. On Friday, Sykes's division had a very handsome little affair, in which his command behaved very well and gained decided advantages, driving the enemy before them; but Sykes was *recalled* just as his advance was successful. In the evening he repelled an attack of the enemy. On Sunday, Humphreys's two brigades were engaged, creditably and successfully, and on Monday a brigade of Griffin's was sent forward to engage and feel the enemy's position, which duty was successfully accomplished. The heavy fighting, however, of Saturday and Sunday was

done by Slocum, Couch and Sickles, particularly the latter, whose losses are greater than any other corps, unless it be Sedgwick's, which suffered very severely in his attempt to attack the enemy from Fredericksburg.

I have been a good deal flattered by the expression of opinion on the part of many officers, that they thought and wished I should be placed in command, and poor Hooker himself, after he had determined to withdraw, said to me, in the most desponding manner, that he was ready to turn over to me the Army of the Potomac; that he had enough of it, and almost wished he had never been born. Since seeing the President, however, he seems in better spirits, and I suppose, unless some strong pressure is brought to bear from external sources, he will not be disturbed. Hooker has one great advantage over his predecessors in not having any intriguer among his subordinate generals, who are working like beavers to get him out and themselves in.

For some reason or other they have prohibited bringing newspapers to camp, so that I am completely in the dark as to public opinion.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, *May 10, 1863.*

There is a great deal of talking in the camp, and I see the press is beginning to attack Hooker. I think these last operations have shaken the confidence of the army in Hooker's judgment, particularly among the superior officers. I have been much gratified at the frequent expression of opinion that I ought to be placed in command. Three of my seniors (Couch, Slocum and Sedgwick) have sent me word that they were willing to serve under me. Couch, I hear, told the President he would not serve any longer under Hooker, and recommended my assignment to the command. I mention all this confidentially. I do not attach any importance to it, and do not believe there is the slightest probability of my being placed in command. I think I know myself, and am sincere when I say I do not desire the command; hence I can quietly attend to my duties, uninfluenced by what is going on around me, at the same time expressing, as I feel, great gratification that the army and my senior generals should think so well of my services and capacity as to be willing to serve under me. Having no political influence, being no intriguer, and indeed unambitious of the distinction, it is hardly probable I shall be called on to accept or decline. I see the papers attribute Hooker's with-

drawal to the weak councils of his corps commanders. This is a base calumny. Four out of six of his corps commanders were positive and emphatic in their opposition to the withdrawal, and he did it contrary to their advice. Hooker, however, I should judge, feels very secure, and does not seem concerned. I have no idea what his next move will be. For my part it would seem that all projects based on pursuing this line of operations having been tried and failed, we should try some other route. Yet the Administration is so wedded to this line that it will be difficult to get authority to change.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 12, 1863.

I did not suppose you would credit the *canard* in the papers about our crossing and Lee's retreating. This story, however, with minute details, I see is published in Forney's *Press*, an Administration organ, that must have known and did know better. It has been circulated for some purpose, and is doubtless considered a great piece of strategy. There is no doubt Hooker assured the President that he would soon cross again and repair all disaster, but I fear he finds the execution of this promise more difficult than the making. The enemy have all returned to their old positions and they have been seen to-day busily engaged throwing up dirt and strengthening all the crossings by additional works, though one would suppose, from the work they had previously executed, there was no room for more.

To-day I had a visit from Governor Curtin. The Governor is very much depressed, and I tried to put him in better spirits.

I cannot write you fully in relation to all the recent operations. All I can say is that Hooker has disappointed the army and myself, in failing to show the nerve and *coup d'œil* at the critical moment, which all had given him credit for before he was tried. It is another proof of what a sense of responsibility will do to modify a man's character, and should be a warning to all of us to be very cautious how we criticise our neighbors, or predict what we would do ourselves if placed in similar circumstances. My only fear is that Hooker, goaded by the attacks that are now made on him, may be induced to take some desperate step in the hope of retrieving his waning fortunes. At the same time, as I have already told you, he was fully aware when he ordered the withdrawal of the army, that he was running the risk, and great risk, of self-sacrifice. For he said he knew his personal interests were involved in advancing. I believe he acted sincerely, and for what he considered the interests of the

army and the country, but I differed with him in judgment, and I fear events will confirm my view. I was clearly in favor of tempting the hazard of the die, and letting Washington take care of itself. I am sorry for Hooker, because I like him and my relations have always been agreeable with him; but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he has on this occasion missed a brilliant opportunity of making himself. Our losses are terrible; they are said to exceed fifteen thousand men, greater than in any other battle or series of battles, greater than in the whole of the celebrated six days' fighting before Richmond, and greater than McClellan's Maryland campaign. This large loss, together with the loss of over twenty thousand nine-months' and two-years' men, will very materially reduce this army, and unless it be speedily reinforced will paralyze its movements.

Stoneman's success was very complete, and his whole operation brilliant in the extreme. The enemy acknowledge he has beaten Stuart, and that the latter's laurels are faded. Alas, that we should not have taken advantage of his success! As it is, before we can advance or press them back, they will have repaired all the damages Stoneman inflicted on them.

May 13, 1863.

I have not been a great deal at headquarters, being occupied with my command, particularly writing my official report. I have completed this and gotten it off my hands, which is a great relief. There is much talking in the army, but I doubt very much whether Hooker is in any danger of losing his command. The Government seems to be satisfied with him, judging from the tone of those papers known to be connected with it.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 15, 1863.

I received to-day your letter of the 12th instant, advising me of George's¹ arrival at home, which relieved me greatly, although I only yesterday learned of his being sick and having gone to Washington. In utter ignorance of his being sick, and supposing him with his regiment, I saw Hooker and got the order issued assigning him to duty on my staff. It was only my accidentally meeting Lieutenant

¹ Son of General Meade, taken sick with the measles while on Stoneman's cavalry raid, and having to ford a deep river, the rash was driven in, making him ill, necessitating his being sent home.

Furness,¹ of George's regiment, on Stoneman's staff, who first told me George had been very sick on the expedition, but that he was better, and that he (Furness) had seen George and Benoni Lockwood both in the cars on their way to Washington.

I have been very much worried to-day by very extraordinary conduct on the part of Governor Curtin. He came to see me, and in the familiarity of private conversation, after expressing himself very much depressed, drew out of me opinions such as I have written to you about General Hooker, in which I stated my disappointment at the caution and prudence exhibited by General Hooker at the critical moment of the battle; at his assuming the defensive, when I thought the offensive ought to have been assumed; and at the withdrawal of the army, to which I was opposed. This opinion was expressed privately, as one gentleman would speak to another; was never intended for the injury of General Hooker, or for any other purpose than simply to make known my views. Imagine, then, my surprise when General Hooker, who has just returned from Washington, sent for me, and said that General Cadwalader had told him that Governor Curtin had reported in Washington that he (General Hooker) had *entirely lost the confidence of the army*, and that both Generals Reynolds and Meade had lost all confidence in him. Of course, I told Hooker that Governor Curtin had no warrant for using my name in this manner. I then repeated to Hooker what I had said to Governor Curtin, and told him that he knew that I had differed with him in judgment on the points above stated, and that he had no right to complain of my expressing my views to others, which he was aware I had expressed to him at the time the events were occurring. To this Hooker assented and expressed himself satisfied with my statement.

To John Sergeant Meade :²

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 17, 1863.

There is nothing specially new here. We have lost many men by the casualties of the recent battle, and many more since by reason of the expiration of service. In the meantime, the enemy have been largely reinforced from the army recently on the Blackwater. Under these circumstances I don't see how we can advance without addi-

¹ Frank Furness, of Philadelphia.

² Son of General Meade.

tional troops, and as yet I do not hear of any coming. Still, the talk is that we are to move very soon. Yesterday I went to see General Stoneman and Lieutenant Colonel Smith¹, to thank them for their kindness to George², which I did, and said a great many fine things on the part of your mother. Stoneman said he was afraid George would have considered him rough and harsh, as he had to change him in a dark, rainy night from a buggy to a wagon, in a great hurry, and had to speak very sharply. I told him that George remembered nothing but his exceeding kindness.

To Mrs. George G. Meade:

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 19, 1863.

I am sorry to tell you I am at open war with Hooker. He yesterday came to see me and referred to an article in the *Herald*, stating that four of his corps commanders were opposed to the withdrawal of the army. He said this was not so, and that Reynolds and myself had *determined him* to withdraw. I expressed the utmost surprise at this statement; when he said that I had expressed the opinion that it was impracticable to withdraw the army, and therefore I had favored an advance, and as he *knew* it was perfectly practicable to withdraw, he did not consider my opinion as being in favor of an advance. I replied to him that this was a very ingenious way of stating what I had said; that my opinion was clear and emphatic for an advance; that I had gone so far as to say that I would not be governed by any consideration regarding the safety of Washington, for I thought that argument had paralyzed this army too long. I further said that if the enemy were considered so strong that the safety of the army might be jeopardized in attacking them, then I considered a withdrawal impracticable without running greater risk of destroying the army than by advancing, and that it seemed rather singular that he should set me down as the *advocate* of a measure which he acknowledged I asserted to be impracticable. He reiterated his opinion and said he should proclaim it. I answered I should deny it, and should call on those who were present to testify as to whether he or I was right. The fact is, he now finds he has committed a grave error, which at the time he was prepared to assume the responsibility of, but now desires to cast it off on to the shoulders of others; but I rather think he will find himself mistaken. At any

¹ Charles R. Smith, of Philadelphia.

² Son of General Meade.

rate, the *entente cordiale* is destroyed between us, and I don't regret it, as it makes me more independent and free. I also told him that it was my impression at the time, but that of course it could only be known to himself and his God, that he had made up his mind to withdraw the army before he had heard the opinions of his corps commanders. To this he did not make any reply, and I am satisfied that such was the case. I have not seen Reynolds, or any of the others present on the occasion, since I had this conversation with him, but I intend to address each a letter and ask for their impressions of what I did say. Such things are very painful and embarrassing, but I have always feared the time would come when they would be inevitable with Hooker; for I knew no one would be permitted to stand in his way. I suppose he has heard some of the stories flying round camp in regard to my having the command, and these, in connection with what George Cadwalader told him Governor Curtin said, have induced him to believe that I am manœuvering to get him relieved, that I may step in his shoes. God knows the injustice he does me, and that I have never spoken a word to any one except Governor Curtin, and to him I never referred to Hooker's being relieved, but only criticised his recent operations, saying nothing more, or if as much, as I have written to you. I can tell him that if he had no stronger enemy than I am, he might rest much more secure than he can, knowing all that I do. I wish he could hear what some others say; he would look on me very differently.

There are two English officers on a visit to the camp. One of them, Lord Abinger (formerly Mr. Scarlett), Lieutenant Colonel of the Scots Fusileer Guards, brought me a letter from George Ramsay. I am going to-morrow to review my corps, and have invited them to be present. Lord Abinger seems a very nice fellow. He was in Philadelphia in 1857, and speaks a great deal about his visit and the people there. He recognized Major Biddle, asked after his mother, and altogether appears quite at home in Philadelphia society.

I have lost nearly a division by the expiration of service of the two-years' and nine-months' men, so that I have had to break up Humphreys's division, and he is going to take command of the division recently commanded by General Berry, in Sickles's corps. I am very sorry to lose Humphreys. He is a most valuable officer, besides being an associate of the most agreeable character.

My relations with Hooker are such that I cannot ask for the necessary leave to go up to Washington, to receive my sword; so

unless they take some action and get the Secretary to authorize my going up, I fear it will be some time before I come into possession.

Just think, it is nearly two years, indeed over two years, since we have been separated.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *May 20, 1863.*

The battle of Chancellorsville was a miserable failure, in which Hooker disappointed me greatly. His plan was admirably designed, and the early part of it, entrusted to others, was well executed; but after he had assembled his army on the other side near Chancellorsville, instead of striking at once vigorously and instantly, before the enemy, who were surprised, could concentrate, he delayed; gave them thirty-six hours to bring up and dispose of their troops; permitted them to attack him, and after their doing so, failed to take advantage of their error in dividing and separating their forces, but allowed them to engage only about half his army and to unite their forces after driving back a portion of ours. He then assumed the defensive, doing nothing for two days, while we could hear Sedgwick's guns, and knew they were trying to crush him and must succeed. Finally he withdrew to this side, giving up all the advantages gained, and having to recross with all the obstacles and difficulties increased. Notwithstanding these are my views, I have abstained from making them known to any one, out of consideration for Hooker, who has always pretended to be very friendly to me. I declined to join Couch in a representation to the President, when he was down here, and I refused to join Slocum, who desired to take action to have Hooker removed. I told both these gentlemen I would not join in any movement against Hooker, but that if the President chose to call on me officially for my opinions, I would give them. I have spoken to no one but Governor Curtin, and to him only because he came to see me and spoke so freely and bitterly against Hooker, that I allowed myself to say a part of what I have above written. I considered my conversation with Governor Curtin *private*, and did not expect he would repeat it or quote me. I have seen Senators Wade, Chandler, Wilson and Doolittle, all of whom have been down here to find out what they could, but I have abstained from saying anything, as they did not think proper to ask me any questions. Hooker is safe, I think, from the difficulty of finding a successor, and from the ridiculous appearance we present of changing our generals after each battle. He may, and I trust he will, do better next time; but unless

he shows more aptitude than in the last affair, he will be very apt to be defeated again. Lee committed a terrible blunder in allowing us to come back; he might have destroyed us by a vigorous attack while we were retreating.

The review of my corps passed off very well yesterday, and Lord Abinger expressed himself greatly pleased. After the review I had a collation at my quarters, which seemed to be equally pleasing to his lordship. He said that if he had time to stop in Philadelphia, he would hunt you up.

Turnbull, who was at the review, showed me a few lines he had received from Proctor Smith, by a flag of truce that went after the wounded. Smith is Chief Engineer on Lee's staff. He begs to be remembered to you and me. Beckham is major of artillery and commands a battery with Stuart's cavalry. Smith is colonel.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 23, 1863.

The story of Hooker losing his head, and my saving the army, is a *canard*, founded on some plausible basis. When Hooker was obliged to give up Chancellorsville and draw in his lines, I fortunately had anticipated this, and was prepared with my troops to take up the new line in a very short time, and to receive within it the broken columns from the old line. About this time Hooker, who had just been stunned by being struck with a pillar of a house, hit by a shot, felt himself fainting and had to dismount from his horse and lie on his back for ten or fifteen minutes. During this time he was constantly calling for me, and this operation above referred to was executed by me. Outsiders, particularly his staff, not knowing my previous preparations and expectation of having to do this, and seeing it so well and quickly done, were astonished, and gave me more credit than I was entitled to, and hence arose the story that I saved the army. *Hooker never lost his head, nor did he ever allow himself to be influenced by me or my advice.* The objection I have to Hooker is that *he did not and would not listen* to those around him; that he acted deliberately on his own judgment, and in doing so, committed, as I think, fatal errors. If he had lost his head, and I had been placed in command, you may rest assured a very different result would have been arrived at, whether better or worse for us cannot be told now; but it certainly would have been more decisive one way or the other. Secretary Chase was in camp day before yesterday at headquarters. He neither honored me with a visit, nor did he invite me to visit

him; of course I did not see him. He returned in the afternoon, accompanied by Wilkes, of the *Spirit of the Times*. It is understood that the Cabinet is divided, Chase upholding Hooker, Blair and Seward in opposition. I have always thought Hooker would be allowed another chance, and I sincerely trust and hope, and indeed believe, he will do better, as I think he now sees the policy of caution is not a good one. Until our recent imbroglio, he has always spoken of me very warmly, though he has never asked my advice, or listened to my suggestions. What he is going to do or say now I don't know, but I shall not count on any very friendly offices from him. Still, I should be sorry to see him removed, unless a decidedly better man is substituted.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 25, 1863.

I have addressed a circular letter to each of the officers present at the much-talked-of council of war, asking them to give me their recollections of what I said, and unless I am terribly mistaken, their answers will afford me ample means of refuting Hooker's assertion that my opinion sustained him in withdrawing the army.

We have to-day the glorious news from Grant.¹ It is in sad contrast with our miserable fiasco here, the more sad when you reflect that ours was entirely unnecessary, and that we have never had such an opportunity of gaining a great victory before.

Did I tell you that Curtin promptly answered my letter, saying that General Cadwalader had entirely misapprehended what he said to him; that he (Curtin) had never so understood me, or repeated to Cadwalader that I had lost all confidence in Hooker?

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., May 26, 1863.

George's² appointment as Aide-de-Camp and Captain arrived yesterday.

We have nothing new; everything is quiet on our side. I am looking for a movement on the part of the enemy that will stir us up pretty soon. Stoneman is off on leave, and I don't think will return here again. He does not want to, and Hooker does not want him back. Hooker is very severe on him, and says his raid amounted to nothing at all; that he was eight days going and only two coming

¹ Vicksburg, Miss., invested by the Federal troops under Major-General Ulysses S. Grant. Confederate troops under General John C. Pemberton.

² Son of General Meade.

back, and many other things of this kind tending to disparage Stoneman.

Only one officer (Reynolds) has as yet answered my circular letter, and he says: "Your opinion was decided and emphatic for an advance at daylight." The attempt to fasten on *me* the responsibility of withdrawing the army is one of the shallowest inventions that Hooker could have devised, which, if he ever brings to a public issue, must recoil on him.

There are many things I would like to tell you, but cannot at present; but I have no doubt in due time they will all be made public. I have no doubt the Administration has determined to sustain Hooker, and to this I do not object, as I really believe he will do better next time, and still think there is a great deal of merit in him.

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., *June 3, 1863.*

George made his appearance this morning; he seems quite delighted with the change in his position, and particularly tickled at being made a captain. Lieutenant Colonel Webb (son of James Watson Webb), who is on my staff, has just returned from a short leave in New York. He says every one in New York is talking of the fight at Chancellorsville, and is well posted up in all its details.

CAMP ABOVE FALMOUTH, *June 6, 1863.*

My last letter told you that my corps had been moved up the river, charged with the duty of guarding the several crossing places, and preventing, if possible, the passage of the river by the enemy. General Hooker had received intelligence which induced him to believe Lee was about attempting a manœuvre similar to the one we tried last month. I have consequently been actively employed riding about, superintending the posting of troops, giving instructions, etc. As yet everything has been very quiet on our part of the line. To-day, however, Hooker had reason to believe most of the enemy had left his immediate front on the heights back of Fredericksburg. He accordingly undertook to throw a bridge across, where Franklin crossed last December. About five o'clock yesterday evening we heard heavy firing, which lasted nearly two hours, which, I understand, was our batteries, endeavoring to drive the enemy from the rifle-pits they had dug to oppose the construction of the bridge. I do not know whether we succeeded or not, as, being some miles away, I have no means of

ascertaining. It has been my opinion for some time that Lee would assume the offensive so soon as he was reinforced sufficiently to justify him in doing so; but whether he has yet commenced is, I think, not positively settled. Nor have I quite made up my mind what he will do when he moves. I should think it would be policy on his part to endeavor to overcome this army before he undertakes any invasion of the North. His experience of last summer should teach him the danger of leaving an army on his flank and rear, and if he can once destroy or cripple this army, he will have no opposition to his progress of invasion. It is this reasoning which makes me wonder at the supineness and apathy of the Government and people, leaving this army reduced as it has been by casualties of battle and expiration of service, and apparently making no effort to reinforce it.

June 8, 1863.

I think for the present the storm has blown over. Both Lee and Hooker appear to be playing at cross-purposes. Hooker took it into his head that Lee was moving and made preparations accordingly. These preparations were construed by Lee into a movement on our part, etc. Sedgwick is still, I understand, across, below Fredericksburg, but is unmolested by the enemy. Pleasanton, with a large force of cavalry, will cross above to-day, and push his way towards Culpeper and Gordonsville, to see what they are doing in that direction.

CAMP, June 11, 1863.

This army is weakened, and its *morale* not so good as at the last battle, and the enemy are undoubtedly stronger and in better *morale*. Still, I do not despair, but that if they assume the offensive and force us into a defensive attitude, that our *morale* will be raised, and with a moderate degree of good luck and good management, we will give them better than they can send. War is very uncertain in its results, and often when affairs look the most desperate they suddenly assume a more hopeful state. See the changes and transitions at Vicksburg, to say nothing of our own experience. This makes me hope that it will be our turn next time. The day before yesterday Pleasanton, with all the cavalry and two brigades of infantry, crossed just above us, and had a very brilliant affair with the enemy's cavalry, who it appears were just ready and about starting on a grand raid, some say into Pennsylvania.¹ They outnumbered us, but after

¹ Battle of Brandy Station, Va., June 9, 1863.

handling them pretty severely, Pleasanton came back. The Lancers particularly distinguished themselves, though I am sorry to hear with considerable loss.¹ It is said Major Morris² is missing, supposed to have been thrown from his horse and fallen into the enemy's hands. Captain Davis³ was killed. Lennig⁴ is missing, believed to be wounded. Captain Leiper⁵ is missing. Lieutenant Ellis⁶ is wounded. Lieutenant Colladay,⁷ missing. Charley Cadwalader⁸ was with them, also Captain Dahlgren, of General Hooker's staff. This latter officer says he was with Morris, and had just jumped a ditch, when his horse was shot. On dismounting, and looking around, he saw Morris's horse without a rider, and he thinks Morris was thrown in jumping the ditch. Charles Coxe⁹ is all right, so also is Willie White,¹⁰ who had two horses shot under him, and broke two sabres. Newhall¹¹ was on Pleasanton's staff, and was not with the regiment when it made a dashing and gallant charge on a battery, getting in among the guns, which they would have captured had they been promptly supported. Harry Winsor¹² is safe, also Welsh.¹³ I am glad the regiment has had a chance and so brilliantly availed themselves of it. George¹⁴ is quite disgusted with his luck, but I tell him a live dog is better than a dead lion.

The backing out of Burnside's course towards the *Chicago Times* looks suspicious on the part of the President. If peace can be secured without loss of honor, no one would be more rejoiced than I; but I do not see how this can be brought about, with matters as they stand at present. If we could only thoroughly whip these fellows two or three times, regular out-and-out defeats; but I don't advocate peace until we have clearly shown them, as we ought to have done long since, our superiority in the field. I can hardly expect you to enter fully into these views, but if you had been humiliated as I have been by seeing your cause and party defeated when they should be victorious, you would be roiled, too, and would not be willing to give up till things assumed an aspect more consistent with your pride and honor.

¹ "Rush's Lancers," 6th Pa. Cav.

² Robert Morris, Jr., of Philadelphia, captured and died in Libby Prison.

³ Charles B. Davis, of Philadelphia.

⁴ Thompson Lennig, of Philadelphia.

⁵ Charles L. Leiper, of Philadelphia.

⁶ Rudolph Ellis, of Philadelphia.

⁷ Samuel R. Colladay.

⁸ Charles E. Cadwalader, of Philadelphia.

⁹ Charles B. Coxe, of Philadelphia.

¹⁰ William White, of Philadelphia.

¹¹ Frederick C. Newhall, of Philadelphia.

¹² Henry Winsor, Jr., of Boston.

¹³ Osgood Welsh, of Philadelphia.

¹⁴ Son of General Meade.

We are now on the *qui vive* to know what the enemy are going to do. I am removed from Hooker's headquarters and know nothing of what is going on, either of plans or surmises. In some respects this is convenient, as I am spared much speculation. In other respects it is not so agreeable, because I like to form my own judgment on what is going on, and to make my preparations accordingly. If Lee is going to assume the offensive, I presume he will not long delay; but whether he will move to our right, trying to get between us and Washington, or whether he will move up the valley as he did last summer, or whether he will attack us here, are questions the future only can solve. All we can do is to be on the lookout and ready. Perhaps Hooker may find a chance to assume the offensive and reverse matters, as the enemy did at Chancellorsville. This I think would be good luck for us.

CAMP ABOVE FALMOUTH, *June 13, 1863.*

Everything continues very quiet, and two corps having been moved above me on the river, I feel quite secure and comfortable. Reynolds moved up yesterday, and stopped to see me as he passed. He told me that being informed by a friend in Washington, that he was talked of for the command of this army, he immediately went to the President and told him he did not want the command and would not take it. He spoke, he says, very freely to the President about Hooker, but the President said he was not disposed to throw away a gun because it missed fire once; that he would pick the lock and try it again. To-day I hear Hooker is going to place Reynolds in command of the right wing of the army—that is, his corps, Birney's and mine.

CAMP NEAR MANASSAS, *June 16, 1863.*

George¹ wrote to you yesterday and informed you the army had been withdrawn from the Rappahannock. We are now collecting in the vicinity of this place and Centreville, awaiting orders; I presume, also, the development of the enemy's movements. He has not as yet followed us from the Rappahannock, and it is reported that he is in heavy force up the Valley of the Shenandoah, having taken Harper's Ferry and advanced to Chambersburg. I think Lee has made a mistake in going into Maryland before meeting our army. I hope his movement will arouse the North, and that now men enough

¹ Son of General Meade.

will be turned out, not only to drive him back, but to follow and crush him. If his course does not awake the North from the lethargy it has been in, nothing will ever save us. We have had the usual hard service of active operations for the last few days, loss of rest and hard riding, but both George and I stand it very well.

GREEN SPRINGS, VA.,¹ *June 18, 1863.*

We reached here last evening, on our way to Leesburg. The enemy, as far as we can learn, are in the Valley of the Shenandoah, occupying the line they did when McClellan crossed the Potomac last fall. We cannot learn that any great force has crossed into Maryland or Pennsylvania. Should this prove true, we shall have to go to the valley after them.

ALDIE, *June 20, 1863.*

We came here yesterday afternoon to sustain Pleasanton, who has had several brilliant skirmishes with the enemy's cavalry in this vicinity, and who thought they were bringing up infantry. To-day we hear Ewell has crossed the Potomac at Williamsport. This indicates an invasion of Maryland, of which I have hitherto been skeptical. If this should prove true, we will have to rush after them. I had almost rather they would come here and save us marches. I am in pretty good spirits—a little disgusted at the smallness of my corps, only ten thousand men, but I believe they will do as much as any equal numbers.

CAMP AT ALDIE, VA., *June 23, 1863.*

Yesterday General Pleasanton drove the enemy's cavalry across what is called the Loudoun Valley, or the valley formed by the South Mountain and Bull Run Mountains. He did not find any infantry in Loudoun Valley, and reports Lee's army about Winchester, in the Valley of the Shenandoah, and that A. P. Hill, whom we left at Fredericksburg, is coming up the valley to join Lee. When Hill joins Lee, he will have a large army, numerically much superior to ours, and he will then, I presume, develop his plans.

I have seen a paper now and then, and have been greatly amused at the evident fears of the good people of the North, and the utter want of proper spirit in the measures proposed to be taken. I did think at first that the rebels crossing the line would result in benefit

¹ Gum Springs on map.

to our cause, by arousing the people to a sense of the necessity of raising men to fill their armies to defend the frontier, and that the Government would take advantage of the excitement to insist on the execution of the enrollment bill; but when I see the President calling out *six* months' men, and see the troops at Harrisburg refusing to be mustered in for fear they may be kept six months in service, I give up in despair. I hope it will turn out better, and we have been disappointed so many times when we had reason to look for success, it may be, now that we are preparing for a reverse, we may suddenly find ourselves in luck.

This is a beautiful country where I am now encamped. It is right on the Bull Run Mountains, which, though not very high, yet are sufficiently so to give effect to the scenery and purify the air. Charles F. Mercer lived in Aldie; President Monroe's estate was here, and the mansion of the old Berkeley family, showing that in old times it was the abode of the aristocracy. It is a great contrast to the arid region around Fredericksburg that we left.

CAMP AT ALDIE, VA., *June 25, 1863.*

Reynolds's honors, commanding the right wing, only lasted two days, for as soon as we got to Manassas, General Hooker informed him he would communicate direct with corps commanders. Reynolds was at first quite indignant, and took it into his head that Hooker expected our withdrawal from the Rappahannock was going to be disputed, and that he had selected him for a scapegoat to bear the brunt of the shock. Everything, however, passed off quietly, as Lee was well on his way up the Valley of the Shenandoah, and A. P. Hill, who was left to guard Fredericksburg, was glad enough to let us go, that he might follow Lee, as he has done and rejoined him, although we could readily have prevented him, and in my judgment should have done so. What Lee's object is in moving up the valley is not yet clearly developed. He has massed his army between Winchester and Martinsburg. The invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, so far as I can gather, has as yet been a mere foraging expedition, collecting supplies and horses for his army. He does not, at the latest accounts, seem to have crossed any of his good troops; he has perhaps been waiting for Hill, also to see what Hooker and the authorities at Washington were going to do, before he struck a blow. That he has assumed the offensive and is going to strike a blow there can be no doubt, and that it will be a very formidable one is equally

certain, unless his forces have been very much exaggerated. He is said to have collected over ninety thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, with a large amount of artillery. Hooker has at present no such force to oppose him, but I trust the Government will reinforce Hooker with troops that have been scattered at Suffolk, Baltimore, Washington and other places, and that such will be the case seems probable, from a despatch I received from headquarters yesterday, asking me if I would like to have the Pennsylvania Reserves attached to my corps. I replied, promptly: "Yes; they or any other reinforcements that could be obtained." I understand the Reserves are seven thousand strong, which will be a very decided addition to my present weak corps. I have seen very few papers lately, and therefore know little or nothing of what is going on.

I see you are still troubled with visions of my being placed in command. I thought that had all blown over, and I think it has, except in your imagination, and that of some others of my kind friends. I have no doubt great efforts have been made to get McClellan back, and advantage has been taken of the excitement produced by the invasion of Maryland to push his claims; but his friends ought to see that his restoration is out of the question, so long as the present Administration remains in office, and that until they can remove Stanton and Chase, all hope of restoring McClellan is idle. I have no doubt, as you surmise, his friends would look with no favor on my being placed in command. They could not say I was an unprincipled intriguer, who had risen by criticising and defaming my predecessors and superiors. They could not say I was incompetent, because I have not been tried, and so far as I have been tried I have been singularly successful. They could not say I had never been under fire, because it is notorious no general officer, not even Fighting Joe himself, has been in more battles, or more exposed, than my record evidences. The only thing they can say, and I am willing to admit the justice of the argument, is that it remains to be seen whether I have the capacity to handle successfully a large army. I do not stand, however, any chance, because I have no friends, political or others, who press or advance my claims or pretensions, and there are so many others who are pressed by influential politicians that it is folly to think I stand any chance upon mere merit alone. Besides, I have not the vanity to think my capacity so pre-eminent, and I know there are plenty of others equally competent with myself, though their names may not have been so much mentioned. For

these reasons I have never indulged in any dreams of ambition, contented to await events, and do my duty in the sphere it pleases God to place me in, and I really think it would be as well for you to take the same philosophical view; but do you know, I think *your* ambition is being roused and that you are beginning to be bitten with the dazzling prospect of having for a husband a commanding general of an army. How is this?

This is a beautiful country we are now in, and we are reveling in lovely landscapes, with such luxuries as fresh butter, milk, eggs, lamb, chickens and other delicacies, to which we have for a long time been strangers. There are some nice people about here, though strong "secesh." I went the other day to see a fine view, which is to be had from the Monroe estate. It is at present in the hands of a Major Fairfax, who is on Longstreet's staff. While on the ground I received a polite message from Mrs. Fairfax, saying she would be glad to see me and show me the house, whereupon I called, and found her very affable and ladylike and very courteous. I apologized for my intrusion, but she said she did not so consider it; that she was always glad to see the officers of our army, knowing they took an interest in the place from its having been the former residence of a President of the United States. She referred to the war in a delicate manner, and said her husband, the Major, was at home when Pleasanton attacked Aldie, and that he had barely time to mount his horse and get off before their people were obliged to retire. I spent a half-hour chatting with her and left. Generally the women, when they find you are a gentleman, and not violent and bloodthirsty in your feelings, are disposed to be civil and affable.

Young Morrow, of George's company, has returned from Richmond. He told George that he saw a great deal of Beckham when he was first captured, who inquired very particularly after me.

Everything is very quiet here. The enemy have a small cavalry force watching us, but no signs of their army this side of the Blue Ridge. At what moment they may show themselves, or when we will advance, is more than I can tell. I hear nothing whatever from headquarters, and am as much in the dark as to proposed plans here on the ground as you are in Philadelphia. This is what Joe Hooker thinks profound sagacity—keeping his corps commanders, who are to execute his plans, in total ignorance of them until they are developed in the execution of orders.

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