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EPISODES

+ OF +

*The Mexican War.*

A POEM,

BY LT.-COL. GEO. W. PATTEN,  
U.S.A.



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Poughkeepsie N. Y. }  
Oct 22 1874 }



EPISODES  
OF  
THE MEXICAN WAR.  
A Poem.

*Delivered before the New York Associated Veterans of  
the Mexican War, at the Lexington Avenue  
Opera House, New York City,  
on the Thirty-first  
Anniversary  
of the*

CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF MEXICO.

BY LT.-COL. <sup>✓</sup>GEORGE W. PATTEN, U. S. A.

NEW YORK:  
BRENTANO'S LITERARY EMPORIUM,  
39 UNION SQUARE.

1878.  
53

own (un)  
Dec. 29. 1900

PS2524  
P48 E6



HIRAM TRUSS, Jr.,  
BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,  
15 NEW CHURCH ST.,  
NEW YORK.



Ms. A. 1. 10. 66. 1922

## INTRODUCTION.

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TO the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War, this little poem, at whose request it was written, is submitted without comment.

To that class of readers, if any there be, who are more inclined to censure than to extol, the author does not deem it incumbent on him to make any concession, by way of excuse for thus "rushing into print," as he is fully aware that no apology would suffice to blunt the pen of adverse criticism or mitigate the poignancy of its sting.

In order to a correct understanding of several little episodes introduced in the course of the narrative, the reader is referred to the following notes :

THE MAID OF THE RIO GRANDE.—In an early part of the war, a Mexican force, under General Ampudia, having been driven by the troops of General Taylor to the border of the Rio Grande, it is said, that the Mexican general, in order to save himself from being taken prisoner, plunged

head-long into the river and swam to the opposite bank. The maid of the Rio Grande, alluded to in the text, in order to show her contempt for the Mexican commander and her admiration for the heroic leader of the American troops, had bestowed upon the more docile of her household pets the appellation of "Ampudia," and designated the fiercer one as "General Taylor."

CAMARGO,—“The ditch of Camargo” was for a long time a theme of great merriment among the American forces, the officer superintending its construction having made the mistake of placing it *inside* the fortifications.

CERRO GORDO,—Major General James Shields, who was severely wounded at the battle of Cerro Gordo, was present at the Opera House on the evening of the delivery of the poem, and officiated as orator.

GENERAL SANTA ANNA, having lost a limb in a previous conflict, was provided with an artificial one, a duplicate of which, together with his gold-headed cane, was discovered in his carriage, which he had hastily abandoned in order to expedite his flight from the battle field of Cerro Gordo.

These articles (the cane and cork leg) were taken in charge by Colonel Riley, of the 2d Infantry, and subsequently forwarded to the Mexican general.



TATNALL.—At the time the American fleet lay off Vera Cruz, previous to the investment of the city, Captain Tatnall, a brave but eccentric Georgian, was seen, one morning, to weigh anchor and head his little craft (a small gun-boat called the “Spit-fire”) directly for the Castle of San Juan d’Uloa, as he, laughingly, said, for the purpose of drawing the fire of that fortress.

His wishes were amply gratified, as the Castle soon opened upon him with its heaviest shot and shell. The commander of the fleet, observing the perilous position of the gun-boat, telegraphed for its immediate return. Tatnall slowly obeyed the order, and strange to say, came out from the fiery shower unharmed. As he passed by the transports, on his return, he was loudly applauded by the soldiers on board of them, and was heard severely rebuking his crew because not a single one of them, in conformity with his expressed wishes, would suffer himself to be killed.

SAN JUAN D’ULOA.—This fortress, during the siege, was held by General Morelles, who, after a protracted resistance, was induced to capitulate, it is said, on account of sickness; the command of the castle having devolved temporarily on a subaltern officer.

G. W. P.

*Poughkeepsie, N. Y., October 3d, 1878.*

# ARGUMENT.

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*Introduction.*

*Maid of the Rio Grande and her Pets.*

*Ditch of Camargo.*

*Camargo Damsel and her Guitar.*

*"Hail Columbia!"*

*Cerro Gordo.*

*General Shields.*

*Santa Anna.*

*Paroled Prisoners.*

*Belle of Jalapa.*

*Vera Cruz.*

*Army Afloat.*

*Freak of Tatnall.*

*The Landing.*

*Deaths of Vinton and Albertis.*

*The Siege.*

*The Surrender.*

*Farewell.*



## EPISODES

—OF—

### The Mexican War.

---

PERHAPS it may be thought 'twere better  
taste,

(Saving thereby his time from useless waste)



For one to arms accustomed all his days,

To strive for *laurels* rather than for *bays*;

Where fields opposing test their struggling  
might,

To *join* the battle than to *sing* the fight.

But called by partial voices to the front,



(Not such to see as was your former wont)  
And urged to action by the martial muse,  
What had the hapless soldier left to choose?  
Look with forbearance, generous comrades,  
then,  
On him who sheathes the sword to wield  
the pen.

I sing of war—not such as Homer sung  
When verse unwritten flowed from minstrel  
tongue,  
Telling how came about the siege of Troy,  
From naughty conduct of a girl and boy,  
And how the Greeks and Trojans were at  
odds,  
'Till Illium fell—forsaken by the gods.  
Nor yet such fierce affray as met the eyes,  
When Milton's angels quarreled in the skies,  
Nor ceased till he who tried to seize the  
crown,  
From the celestial heights was hustled down.  
Nor yet again such combats as arose,  
When Rome's proud eagles hovered o'er her  
foes,

And gazing world-ward from his car of fame,  
Great Cæsar saw--and conquered as he came.  
Quite conscious that such effort would be  
vain,

I tune my harp strings to a humbler strain.  
Remembering what occurred not long ago,  
"My voice is still for war"—with *Mexico*;  
But not quite yet—so putting off the fray,  
The muse looks backward to an earlier day,  
When you and I marched o'er the hostile sod,  
Where Scott commanded and where Taylor  
trod.

But first an episode or two she brings,  
(Chosen from several tingling on her strings)  
Portraying how in minds of divers mood,  
If not with all, with *some* the army stood;  
And after that—provided so you choose—  
She'll take you with her on to Vera Cruz.

First then of all, to try the muse's wing,  
In humble flight she will attempt to sing  
Of what occurred between a soldier "laddie,"  
Belonging to the staff of "Rough and  
Ready,"

And a young girl who, judging from her  
tone,  
Preferred, somewhat, our heroes to her own.

### *The Tiger Cat.*

It was not long after Resaca's day,  
When Taylor drove Ampudia's hosts away,  
While to escape, forgetful of his pride,  
The chieftain swam the Rio Grande's tide,  
That on a porch, which over-looked the flood,  
There sat a maiden of the Aztec blood;  
And by her chair a stranger was in view,  
Wearing the costume of the "boys in blue."  
Pleased seemed the stranger and as pleased  
the maid,  
Although his dress had not her country's  
shade,  
And as they both indulged in converse  
sweet,  
Such as obtains when youthful sexes meet,  
It was observed, at times, she turned to chide  
A creature like a wild-cat at her side,  
Whose savage mew with mortal terror shook  
A little dog, which in her lap she took.

The puppy from a mongrel breed was sprung,  
The cat a species of the tiger's young,  
The one she called "Ampudia"—spoke his  
name

As oft' as to her lap the puppy came;  
The other bore a well known *soubriquet*,  
Which at the time she did not chance to say.  
Observing how with rage the wild cat  
glowed,

At the caresses on her charge bestowed,  
As the dog, trembling, couched upon her  
knees,  
She calmed his fears with words somewhat  
like these :

"Poor little pet ! and did he find it handy  
To cross, without a boat, the Rio Grande ?  
And does he want to take another swim  
Because the horrid tiger growls at him ?  
Ampudia ! poor Ampudia ! does he whine  
Because the kitten's eyes are big and shine ?"  
And o'er the cur, awhile, she softly sung,  
What seemed a ditty, in her own sweet  
tongue ;

Then quickly starting up from where she sat,

With finger pointing to the restless cat,  
Whose savage howl and fiercely flashing eyes  
Once more elicited the puppy's cries ;  
" Voyez Americain !" she said, " look there !  
See tiger cat ! Ampudia he scare !"

" And what's *his* name, fair maid, whose  
eyes of fire  
Glance on the lap-dog trembling 'neath his  
ire ?"

—Passed o'er the damsel's cheek a rising  
flush,  
Which as she turned changed to a deeper  
blush ;  
Bright hues of shame not difficult to raise,  
When foeman's daughter speaks in foeman's  
praise—

" *His* name of whom Ampudia's so afraid ?  
Ask you *his* name ?—'t is *Taylor*," said the  
maid.

Again, come fly with me on wings of song,  
And view yon bristling columns march along,



Until their bayonets on a river gleam,  
Not far removed from Rio Grande's stream.  
Ascending up its bank, the army's van  
Enters a village on the San Juan;  
A rustic hamlet not unknown to fame,  
All will admit who hear Camargo's name.  
The same an astute General fortified,  
Placing the ditch upon the adverse side,  
An engineering feat at which the foe,  
Not only laughed but, also, thanked him too.

### *The Maid of Camargo.*

But to proceed in order—long before  
Th' invading forces landed on their shore,  
The priests had told the people how the  
Yanks  
Were given to pillage and all sorts of pranks;  
Such as reducing towns by sword and flame,  
And other capers scarcely fit to name :  
So when the Union columns came in view,  
Expecting something dreadful from the crew,  
Something they knew not what—and never  
knew,

The frightened people to the churches ran,  
Flying to Mary—to be saved from man;  
The entering troops increasing their alarms,  
By forming on the plaza under arms.  
Just opposite the forces on that day,  
Perhaps a rod or two from where they lay,  
Rose a cathedral, near whose sacred ground  
Hundreds for safety had collected round.  
Among the sweltering masses—some at  
prayer,  
Some at—I know not what—nor do I care,  
(Although 'twas said, sometimes, among the  
crowd,  
Curses were heard—not muttered over  
loud—)  
The looker on might see a little lass  
Forcing her way before the yielding mass,  
(A fair-haired girl, whose bright Castilian  
eye  
Proclaimed her blood of no mere common  
dye),  
And, once delivered from its surging flood,  
Approach the Plaza where the forces stood.  
Advancing from the dim Cathedral's shade,

Startled even at the sound herself had made,  
It was observed, when from the lines not far,  
Something she bore resembling a guitar,  
While something like a scarf—white, blue  
and red,

(Inviting hues !) was bound around her head.  
Approaching nearer still, she paused to gaze  
At the long line of troops, who, in amaze  
At the appearance of so fair a thing,  
Looked on the girl with silent wondering.

Then she, as conscious of her power to im-  
part

What most would touch the stern invaders'  
heart,

Loosening from her guitar its silken string,  
Fingered it gently first, to try its ring,  
And then with pleading look—eyes with  
emotion dim,

All trembling, swept the chords—and played  
*Our Nation's hymn.*

Then voices rough, from out that stalwart  
band,

Chimed in with "Hail Columbia ! happy  
land ;"

While from our ranks, no longer now afraid,  
One loud huzza, greeted the Aztec maid,  
And she, unharmed by hostile blade or ball,  
Returning back, gave confidence to all.

### Cerro Gordo.

Once more, descending from her airy heights,  
Upon another scene the muse alights.  
'Twas after Cerro Gordo's dreadful day,  
That on the field a bleeding warrior lay :  
Fallen but not in death—to live again  
Where war's red chariots skim the sanguine  
plain,  
Proving to all by his return to life,  
How Honor lives in and beyond the strife.  
Yes ! silent though on tented plain it lies,  
With all its seeming, Honor never dies !  
When to its course, apparent close is given,  
It flies from Earth to find a home in Heaven.  
And who was he the patriot and the brave,  
Who found a crimson bed—but not a grave ?  
With whom, while wandering from breast to  
breast,  
The soul of courage found a place to rest ?

In after years who fought in many fields ?  
Who but yon war-scarred man—the veteran  
SHIELDS.

Once more ! 'Twas after Cerro Gordo's day  
When Santa Anna fought—and ran away;  
Showing his troops how fast a man could peg  
Along a race course—with a wooden leg.  
(But better that, considering how he sped,  
Than some we know off—with a wooden  
head).

Well then—T'was after Cerro Gordo fell—  
(If at the story I propose to tell  
I ever shall arrive) such was the crowd  
Of prisoners taken, they were all allowed  
(No pun upon the word) to go "Scott free,"  
Excepting officers—these last to be  
Counted as prisoners held upon parole ;  
After which understanding, they might stroll  
Wherever they saw fit—their friends to meet,  
And talk with them over their sad defeat.  
With this arrangement all appeared content,  
And on the strength of it a portion went

To Orizaba—other parties chose  
Jalapa—to which point my story goes.

### The Belle of Jalapa.

It was a hall of mingled mirth and song,  
Where eyes shone out, as if to light along  
The reveller's mazy pathway—where the  
crowd

Of worshipers to lovely woman bowed,  
As bows an idolizer to a shrine  
Himself had made—half human, half divine.  
Woman in all her varied phase was there,  
Like roses from Jalapa gardens rare,  
Alike in beauty and alike in bloom,  
Differing only in color and perfume ;  
Whether in deep recess, with willing ear  
Listening to murmured words she loves to  
hear,

Or in the dance to sounds of music sweet,  
Swiftly she sailed along, with spangled feet  
Twinkling amid its maze—like stars that flit  
Thro' a thin cloud at night—enlight'ning it.

Gathered, also, were there strong stalwart  
men,

Jalapa's conquerors--while now and then  
Downcast, it was not difficult to trace  
Features belonging the Aztec race;  
Whose every look and action plainly told  
Them as belonging to the class paroled,  
Permitted there thro' courtesy of those  
Who now their friends--were recently their  
foes.

On ! onward ! with the dance ! who cares  
for pause,

'Mid glistening eagles and 'mid floating  
gauze ?

Where beauty sails around with drooping  
head,

Upheld by valor with his martial tread ?

But who is he, with sad and vacant air,  
As if he had no part nor portion there,  
Viewing the scene remotely where he stands  
With looks abstracted and with folded hands?

Oh ! I adjure you by his frequent sigh,  
Soldiers ! have pity on your enemy.

She whom he loves he marks with troubled  
gaze,

Like star-light flitting through the waltz's  
maze;

He sees her panting bosom rise and fall,  
Among the fair, the fairest of them all,  
And, for *another*, views her glances swim  
With the same light which once they had for  
him ;

The smile for which his life he would forego,  
Still on another beams—and that his foe ;  
While as she sweeps along, her head is seen  
Upon his shoulder languidly to lean.

And can love's teachings be so soon forgot ?  
Moments of former joys remembered not ?

It cannot be ! he will again implore  
One favor from her—if she grants no more.  
With faltering steps and half averted glance,  
Amid a pause of the suspended dance,  
Approaching slow, in tones which doubt be-  
trayed,

Her quondam lover thus addressed the maid:  
“ For the next measure—if not in demand—  
Will the Señora yield to me her hand ? ”



Quick flashed the proud Castilian's kindled  
eye;

Her burning cheek assumed a deeper dye ;  
Woe ! to the wretch that ever he was born,  
Who writhed beneath such words of wither-  
ing scorn !

" And ask you this of *me* ?" the damsel said,  
" *You*, in the fight who with your leader fled ?  
Think you Castilian maid so lost to shame,  
As with her own to link a caitiff's name ?  
So small her jeweled fingers in demand,  
That she must trust them to a coward's hand ?  
No, Señor, no !—your pride I would not vex—  
But maids Castilian—*dance not with their  
sex.*"

No word more bitter—censure more severe—  
Than taunt as woman, manly cavalier.

### The Army Afloat.

Now, turn your field glass once again with  
me,

And view an " army standing "—on the sea :  
On shore a term appropriate—but in boat  
Called for distinction's sake—" army afloat."

When early morning first unveiled the sun,  
It was a goodly sight to look upon  
Gunboats and transports carrying stores of  
weight,  
Merchantmen, loaded deep with human  
freight,  
Sloops, men-of-war, tenders, at anchor fast,  
With flags and streamers fluttering from the  
mast,  
All riding idly upon waves that toss,  
Before the city of the *Sacred Cross*.

On every transport that appeared in view  
Men clad in uniform of army blue,  
Crowded its chartered deck—a hardy lot  
Of Union soldiers, under the veteran Scott ;  
The great Pacificator—him who came  
To “conquer peace”—by means of sword  
and flame.

“Peace is my mission” to his foe he said,  
And made it sure—by cutting off his head.

The gale which had prevailed throughout  
the night,

Up to the time the city came in sight,  
( A norther, in those latitudes well known  
By frequent wrecks upon the shingles thrown)  
Had so increased in force during the day,  
The fleet at anchor was compelled to lay.  
Although beyond the reach of shot and shell  
Aimed from the hostile heights, however  
well,

The restless city took especial care  
To send her greetings to us through the air;  
Even the castle, impotent as brave,  
Growled out her "welcome to a bloody  
grave."

Three days and nights the tempest had full  
sway ;

Three days and nights the fleet at anchor  
lay ;

If long the night, still longer seemed the  
days,

Spent by the soldier-crew in various ways.

Meanwhile on board the gun-boats, as they  
rode

Beside the transports where the troops were  
stowed,

Proverbial for impatience one could trace  
Its signs developed by the sailor race.  
On every craft which the observer saw,  
Bronzed hands were busy with the sports of  
war.

In a mock fight some were engaged at play;  
Some scanned the clouds, impatient at  
delay ;

Some played foot ball upon the yard-arm's  
slack,

Until the coxswain, piping, played them  
back;

Some played tattoo upon the idle drum ;  
Some played the fife—and played the d——l  
some ;

While one, I grieve to say—a pious lad—  
Was heard to mutter —“ too darnation bad !”

### *The Castle of San Juan d'Ulua.*

To while away the moments, now and then,  
More serious sports, sometimes, amused the  
men.

Such as when Tatnall in his tiny boat,

To the amusement of the troops afloat,  
With hastily weighed anchor, bearing down,  
Was seen to head directly for the town.  
Passing the city which beheld, aghast,  
Yet bellowed at his rashness as he passed,  
His craft steamed on, defiant of all laws,  
Until it reached the castle's very jaws,  
Where off the ramparts cruising to and fro,  
He tossed the gauntlet to th' astonished foe.

Uloa saw, but from her fortified wall  
Withheld her vengeance from a thing so  
    small,  
Until a shot that skipped along her beam,  
Awoke the fortress from its silent dream.

'Twas then put forth her strength the great  
    Uloa ;  
Bay her fierce war dogs with tumultuous  
    roar;  
Bursts the dark tempest from her smoke-  
    wreathed hold,  
The hot rain pouring, while her thunders  
    rolled;

The waters boil as boils the whirlpool's  
flood;  
The hissing waves grow red—but not with  
blood.

And where was he 'mid all this iron rain?  
Untouched he laughed—and blazed away  
again,  
Until compelled to take the homeward track,  
By signal from the flag-ship ordered back.  
Even then at going, he expressed regret,  
And swore he'd "whip the blackguard bum-  
mers yet,"  
Saying, as slow his craft he turned about,  
If left alone he would have "cleaned them  
out."

"Lubbers," he cried, while tears his eyelids  
filled,  
"Just for my sake—can't one of you get  
killed?  
But one of you my hearties—just to show  
That if not 'ours' at least 'we've met the  
foe.'"

This is not fancy's sketch, but solemn fact,  
He wept because his crew returned intact.  
And now the south wind came on wings of  
balm,

Smoothing the billows with its pinions calm.  
With hopes deferred no longer hearts are  
sick,

With hopes accomplished beat their pulses  
quick ;

The dull suspense—the agony is passed,  
The hour so long delayed arrives at last.  
Hark ! to that sound which o'er the water  
comes !

'Tis the assembly from the flag-ship's drums.  
The troops, obedient to the well known call,  
Swarm on the upper decks—expectant all.  
The surf boats launched are waiting, side by  
side,

In line extended where the transports ride,  
Protected when within the city's reach,  
By friendly gun-boats anchored near the  
beach ;

Which also in their first attempt to land,  
Can sweep such foe as occupies the strand.

Mark now the flag-ship ! Lo ! a signal floats,  
“First line all ready ! forward to your  
boats.”

### *The Landing.*

The signal flag is in the sky !  
Ten thousand hearts are beating high !  
Ye, of the foremost line, draw nigh !

Huzza !

“ Prepare to land ! ” take heed ! stand by !

Huzza !

The surf-boats touch the ship's tall side,  
Along the lea they smoothly ride,  
Cling to the ropes your steps to guide !

Huzza !

Down, down, descend with rapid stride !

Huzza !

Now watch the war-words once again,  
All eyes upon the flag-ship's main !  
“ Land ! land ! ” now reads the signal plain.

Huzza !

Cast off ! give way with stalwart strain !

Huzza !



Trim, trim the boat ! ply, ply the oar,  
The waters foam—the war-dogs roar,  
The death shells burst behind—before—

Huzza !

Bend to the stroke—strain for the shore !

Huzza !

The sea-walls shake with thunder riven,  
Around ye war's red bolts are driven,  
Above ye floats the bird of Heaven—

Huzza !

Strive, brothers, as ye ne'er have striven !

Huzza !

The foremost surf-boat nears the land —  
It grounds, out dash the dauntless band—  
Follow, my boys, with flag in hand—

Huzza !

We breast the surf—we gain the sand—

Huzza !

Now, raise the starry banner high ;  
Rally—close up—crowd 'round—stand by !  
Our eagle rules the Aztec sky :

Huzza !

Comrades ! one cheer for victory !

Huzza !

### The Siege of Vera Cruz.

The beach was gained ! the morning sun  
arose

On bristling lines extended, free from foes,  
Who, when the foremost surf-boats reached  
the land,

Were heard retiring o'er the hills of sand,  
Marking their course by some expended ball,  
Which harmless 'mid the closing ranks would  
fall.

No longer now by obstacles oppressed,  
The troops proceed the city to invest.  
Hard by the spot upon the yielding sands,  
Triumphant where the bristling column  
stands,

High sandy hills, beyond the castle's reach,  
Extending inward, stretch from beach to  
beach ;

A natural breast work whose concentric  
rounds,

Circle the city in their hollow bounds.  
Along this narrow but unguarded pass,

Now crowd the glittering column's mingled  
mass.

The late possessing foe no longer waits,  
But fast retreating seeks the city gates,  
Borne like the chaff upon the rushing wind,  
Leaving all weightier matter far behind,  
Nor stops his speed until from danger free,  
He gains once more the bulwarks by the sea ;  
There to relate how stood the foot and horse  
Till overcome by a superior force;

And when pursued they yelled with all their  
might

And dared the yankee devils to the fight.  
Meanwhile in spite of shells that burst  
around,

And plunging shot that ploughs the sandy  
ground,

(For though the city was far out of sight  
Its half-spent missiles, sometimes, would  
alight)

Onward and on the taunting banners lead,  
Onward and on the crowding escorts speed--  
While round and round, in rings that closer  
twine,

The column weaves its ever circling line.  
But though there seemed few causes for  
alarm,

During the march—not all escaped from  
harm.

'Twas here the noble Vinton bit the ground,  
Yielding his breath without apparent wound;  
A shot, 'twas said, too near his bosom came,  
Stilling the heart which beat for home and  
fame.

And further on the brave Albertis died,  
A drummer lad stretched armless at his side;  
The one all ghastly lay without a head,  
The other calling "mother," as he bled.  
From far Uloa's heights, concealed from view,  
A monster gun the swift projectile threw.  
Startled to hear the crash through branches  
green,

Made by the deadly missile still unseen,  
Albertis, at the moment on the spot,  
Sheltered securely from the reach of shot,  
Stepped, careless, from the covert where he  
sate,

And just in time to meet his sudden fate.

As if to do its fatal mission well,  
By the same shot the young musician fell ;  
His comrades pet—perhaps his mother's  
joy—

Thus fell Albertis and the drummer boy.  
Meanwhile, despite the shower of shot and  
shell,

Some aimed aslant and some directed well,  
About the city, like a serpent cold,  
The army winds its anaconda fold,  
Until at last, extending more and more,  
Its lines converging reach from shore to  
shore.

And then, apparently, for days and days  
The work was staid, and tho' with sore  
amaze,

The foe looked from his towers, his watch  
was vain

For signs of life beyond the desert plain.  
No drum was heard, no distant bugle sang—  
No stirring clash of arms—no cymbals'  
clang—

Concealed from view by works prepared with  
care,

No outward sign revealed "our flag was  
there;"

An army slept with all its sounds of dread,  
Silent as sleeps the city of the dead !

The foe, uncertain where our forces lay,  
With random firing vexed the silent day,  
And tho' sometimes a loose but fatal shot  
Fell in our lines—yet we returned it not.  
"Shame on ye, idle laggards! foulest shame!  
Upon your army and your Union's name !  
Boastful as dastards are—do what you will,  
You dare not raise your heads above the hill !  
Come from your gopher sand holes into sight,  
And Mexico will show ye how to fight.  
And you, our would be allies far and wide,  
Enticed by falsehood to the adverse side,  
Who now in freedom's cause are doubtless  
sick,  
Condemned to labor with the axe and pick;  
Break from the chains your masters would  
install,  
Come to our lines and we'll receive you all;  
Leave the invading tyrant to his fate,

Craving forgiveness when he asks too late."  
Offensive placards bearing taunts like these,  
Came to the works with every morning  
breeze,

Whenever blew from off the hostile shore,  
A norther strong enough to waft them o'er.  
And were you idle, comrades, answer me,  
(I think that yonder one of you I see).

Whose was the pick-axe — whose the  
constant spade,  
Threw up the earthworks, or the platforms  
laid ?

Who, at the dawn, in feverish sleep was found,  
A stone his pillow and his bed the ground ?  
Who, patient at the insults on him cast,  
Smiled, as he said, "pay day will come at  
last ?"

—And it *did* come—as will be told in time,  
If you will listen further to my rhyme.

Up to the moment when that circling band  
Was drawn around the city's guarded strand,  
Against the Union forces, not a raid

The braggart foe to draw them forth had  
made.

Well pleased, no doubt, for all his taunts,  
that they

Within their lines, contented, seemed to stay,  
Dreaming inert, the lazy hours away.

'Twas afternoon—the heavy work was done;  
'Mid hazy clouds went down the setting sun;  
The waters slept—no sound came o'er the  
hill—

The air, “a chartered libertine,” seemed  
still;

And as the shades of evening deeper rose  
All nature breathed of quiet and repose.

If she could speak, as if her voice would say,  
“How sweet the stillness of the closing day,  
When pensive silence soothes the troubled  
breast,

And weary labor sits him down to rest !”

### To Arms.

But hark ! what sound is that ? what light  
is there ?



What sudden boom disturbs the silent air ?  
Again I hear it—nearer still it comes—  
To arms—to arms—strike up the rolling  
drums !

Quick, comrades, quick ! all to your places  
run—

Man—man the works—it is the signal gun.  
Wake up the war-dogs sleeping on the wall !  
Already they are loosed — they hear the  
call—

Behold ! red lightnings flash from mound to  
mound !

Listen ! a nearer—deeper—deadlier sound !  
Peals of live thunder leap from shore to  
shore—

It is—it is *our batteries opening roar.*

I heard all night the mortars deadly clang  
As if, at once, a thousand anvils rang—  
I saw the fiery serpents mounting high,  
As if an hundred meteors lit the sky ;  
And o'er the city's domes a blood-red cloud,  
Like death enveloped in a crimson shroud,

While screech and scream and shout and  
fierce alarms,  
Mixed with the cries of fire and clash of  
arms.

In thunder now the kindled blaze to meet,  
Rattle the cars along the stony street ;  
Now as the smouldering piles in ruin fall,  
Th' insatiate flames to other quarters call.  
Up yonder tall cathedral's graceful spire  
In wreaths fantastic twines the curling fire,  
Seeming 'mid clouds of smoke its arms to  
toss,

(A hideous phantom) upward to the cross.  
In vain the pious crowd, in gathering bands,  
Call upon " Mary " with uplifted hands ;  
No Mary comes her proselytes to save,  
Her altars serve them for a common grave,  
As crushing madly through the pictured  
walls,  
Falls the dread shell, and murders where it  
falls.

Humbled at last—encumbered with the slain,  
Three days and nights beneath that leaden  
rain,

To stay the wrath of their relentless foes,  
A deputation from the city goes,  
Begging Uloa's commandant to yield,  
And save the city which he cannot shield.  
But stern Morelles answers not their cries,  
Still from the castle gun for gun replies,  
While 'mid the fiery shower of bombs and  
balls,  
Red carnage stalks within the city's walls.  
'Twas then that sick at heart and weak and  
pale,  
Morelles' bride pours forth her piteous wail :  
"Stay, soldier, stay," 'tis thus the mother  
pleads,  
Amid the ruins where her offspring bleeds :

### *Plaint of Morelles' Bride.*

"Stay, soldier, stay—one kind reply—  
One answer to my soul's despair !  
When will the death-shell cease to fly,  
The bullet hurtle through the air ?  
See yonder, how the rockets gleam !  
The toppling steeples fall around—  
And pouring thick its sulphurous stream,  
The belching howitz plows the ground."

“Lady ! away—where sleeps thy pride ?  
Thy gallant lord directs the field;  
Art thou a true Castilian’s bride,  
And yet would’st bid our leader yield ?  
We go to face the iron hail,  
‘Morelles !’ is our battle cry,  
One cause is ours—no heart must quail—  
‘Morelles ! death or victory !’ ”

“ I know my lord sustains the fight,  
And know his hand will do its best;  
But tell him, ‘mid the strife to-night,  
His babe lies wounded on my breast.  
Behold ! is ’t not a gentle child ?  
Once with his locks he loved to play;  
Last eve within his arms it smiled—  
He-kissed it as he rode away;

“ But now, alas ! it smiles no more,  
Its cheek is wan and crazed its brain;  
See here ! its robes are red with gore—  
Soldier ! and must I plead in vain ?  
He hears me not—man scorns to hear  
Or mother’s wail or infant’s cry—  
And hark ! again that dreadful cheer !  
‘Morelles ! death or victory !’ ”

She sank before the image dim  
Of her to earth a God who gave,

“Mother! through thee I plead to him,  
Son of the Virgin! Jesu, save!”

\* \* \* \* \*

She ceased—and lo! the boon that man denied  
Indulgent Heaven has yielded to the bride.

### *The Surrender.*

Is it a trumpet ringing on the blast?  
Did ye not hear it, comrades, as it passed?  
Level your glasses towards yon buttress  
brown!

A flag of truce is waving from the town;  
And while we gaze upon it, swells again  
The well known music of a Herald's strain.  
Approaching through a gate, which open  
swings,

A messenger of peace this message brings:  
“Weary with watching, weak from loss of  
life,

The foe is willing to suspend the strife;  
Three days and nights he gallantly had  
stood

'Mid scorching flames and streets that ran  
with blood,

And only asks, in view of valor shown,  
To pass unarmed our lines and join his own "  
Soon as the message to our works had come  
Rolled out, from rank to rank, the pealing  
drum,

Not for the charge, for which those ranks  
were formed

To take, that morn, the city to be stormed,  
But as a signal for the stirring cry,  
Which rent the hills, of "Scott and victory!"  
These terms admitted—from Uloa's mast,  
The starry banner to the breeze was cast,  
While from each tower surrendered by our  
foes,

In lieu of theirs, the spangled flag arose.  
Then through our lines, unchallenged, passed  
in swarms,

The sullen soldiery, deprived of arms,  
All but Morelles, who, as a reward  
For bravery at Uloa, kept his sword.

### *The Farewell.*

Such is the tale your minstrel had to tell,  
How Vera Cruz and how her castle fell.

And now, so patiently you've heard the  
    strain,  
The muse permits you, comrades, once  
    again  
(Leaving behind the city's captured gates)  
To join with those who now the dance  
    awaits;  
Where in the contest soft, though some may  
    bleed,  
'Tis not from heads, but hearts, the wounds  
    proceed;  
Nor made by bolt from fortified wall that flies,  
But by the keener shaft—from woman's eyes.  
I yield you to her tender mercies—sure  
That she who wounds you has the skill to  
    cure.











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