

Democratic Banner.

BY MOORE & HEMPHILL.

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TERMS

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Secretary Marcy's Reply to Gen. Scott—Continued.

The execution of the whole of the most difficult branches of duties appertaining to a military expedition—providing for transportation—is, by the distribution of the business in the War Department, allotted to the Quartermaster General. As an expedition against Vera Cruz had been resolved on some time before you were assigned to take command of it, Gen. Jesup had gone to New Orleans to be in the best position to make the necessary preparations for such an enterprise. From his knowledge and long experience in military affairs, not only in his appropriate department, but as a commander in the field, the government thought it fortunate that you could have the advice and assistance of so able a counsellor.

Your suggestion that it might be necessary to send ships in ballast from the north for transports was not neglected or unheeded by me. Whether it would be necessary or not, depend, according to your statement to me, upon the means of transportation which could be procured at New Orleans, &c. My first step was to write to the Quartermaster General, then at that place, for information on that subject. In my letter to him of the 11th of December, I said:

"It is expected that most of the vessels in the service of the Quartermaster's department can be used as transports for the expedition. It will be necessary that the department should know what portion of the transports which the Quartermaster's department has now under its control for the purposes of its expedition, I have to request that information on this point should be furnished without delay."

"Another point on which the department desires information is, what amount of means of transportation for such an expedition can be furnished at New Orleans, Mobile, and in that quarter?"

"The expense of procuring transports from the Atlantic cities will be exorbitant. Freight is very high and most of the good vessels are engaged for the ordinary purposes of commerce."

It is important to bear in mind that you saw this letter on your first arrival at New Orleans. In writing to me from that place, December 21, you observe: "I have seen your letter (in the hands of Lieut. Colonel Hunt) to the Quartermaster General, dated the 11th." You could not mistake its object, because it was clearly expressed. I asked distinctly, what means of transportation for the expedition can be furnished at New Orleans, &c., and referred to the expense and difficulty of procuring transports from the Atlantic cities. You could not, therefore, but know that my course as to sending ships in ballast from the north would be regulated by the Quartermaster General's reply. While waiting for this information, and in order to prevent delay, and be sure not to deserve the imputation cast upon me, I issued the order of the 15th of December, to which you refer, knowing that it could be modified and conformed to the exigencies of the service, according to the answer which I should receive from General Jesup. His reply is dated the 27th of December, and in it he says:

"Transportation can be provided here for all the troops that may be drawn from the army under the command of General Taylor and for all the ordnance, ordnance stores, and other supplies, which may be drawn either from this depot (the Brazos) or from New Orleans. The public transports—I mean those owned by the United States—that can be spared for the contemplated operations, it is estimated, will carry three thousand men with all their supplies. Vessels can be chartered on favorable terms for any additional transportation that may be required." This letter was submitted to and read by you, as appears from your endorsement thereon.

After referring to some other matters in the letter, you conclude your endorsement as follows: "I recommend that brevet Maj. Gen. Jesup's suggestions be adopted." This fact shows that the letter received your particular attention. When this letter (which you knew was forwarded to the department) was here received—showing that your apprehended difficulty in obtaining sufficient transportation at the south was unfounded, and that it could be provided in that quarter in great abundance on favorable terms—my order of the 15th of December, so far as it related to sending out vessels in ballast, was countermanded. It is strange, indeed, that, after you were made acquainted with the object of my inquiries and Gen. Jesup's letter in reply to them, you should have looked for transport vessels in ballast from the Atlantic cities, and still more strange that their non-arrival should be the proof that you rely on to convict me of having neglected my duty in this instance. If, in truth, you delayed the expedition nearly two months for these transports, I am blameless. The responsibility is in another quarter. It cannot be said that this statement as to the sufficiency of transports to be obtained at the south had an implied reference to what I had ordered from the Atlantic cities, for my order was then unknown to yourself and the Quartermaster General. You first received a copy

of it several days after the date of Gen. Jesup's letter to me, and of your endorsement thereon. [See your letter to me of the 12th January.] Resisted as you were by 'head winds,' enveloped in 'frightful northers,' and oppressed with complicated and perplexing duties in arranging and preparing the expedition against Vera Cruz, some temporary bewilderment may be excused; but, to charge the War Department with your own misapprehensions and mistake, is inexcusable.

My reply to the accusations forces me to expose some of your misstatements of fact. You allege that the expedition, for the want of the 'ten vessels,' was delayed from the 15th of January to the 9th of March. You certainly mean to be understood that on the 15th of January your troops were ready to embark, and were delayed for want of these transports. But this was not so; and I am indebted to you for most abundant proof to establish your inaccuracy.

The great body of your troops for the expedition was drawn from Gen. Taylor's command at Monterey and in the interior of Mexico; and no part of them had reached either the Brazos or Tampico—the points of embarkation—on the 15th of January. In your letter of the 12th of that month to Gen. Brooke, at New Orleans, you said: "I have now to state that it is probable the troops I have called for from Gen. Taylor's immediate command to embark here (the Brazos) and at Tampico, will not reach those points till late in the present month, (January,) say about the 25th." In a letter to me of the 26th of January, you remark that Gen. Butler responded to your call for the troops with the utmost promptitude, and that General Worth had made an admirable movement. "The head of his division arrived with him at the mouth of the Rio Grande the day before yesterday," (24th January) When the remainder came up, is not stated; yet one of your "naked historical facts" places the whole command at the points of embarkation waiting for the "ten vessels" at least ten days before the actual arrival of any part of them.—But if they had been there, why should they have been detained for these vessels? In the same letter—written but two days after the arrival of the head of the first division, and probably before the other had come up—you say that "Quartermaster General, (Brevet Major General Jesup, at New Orleans,) I find has taken all proper measures with judgment and promptitude to provide every thing depending on his department for the despatch and success of my expedition." If more was wanted, cumulative proof might be drawn from the same source—your own correspondence—to show not only that this charge against me has no foundation in truth, but that you can have no apology for having preferred it.

After showing how unfortunate you have been in your specific charges, I may with propriety meet those of a general and sweeping character with a less particular detail of proofs to show their groundlessness.

Though the "ten vessels" were not, for the very sufficient reasons I have assigned, sent out in ballast from the Atlantic cities; yet a very large number were sent thence with stores, supplies, and troops, to co-operate in the expedition.

In General Jesup's letter to me of the 17th inst., a copy of which is sent herewith, he states that fifty-three ships, brigs, barques, and schooners, were sent from the north and the department actually furnished at New Orleans, Brazos, and Tampico, for the army, before it took up the line of march into the interior, one hundred and sixty-three vessels.

I have alluded to the large number of surf boats, and the great difficulty of procuring them, as the cause of the delay in their arrival. I have also a similar reason to offer in reply to your complaint for not having seasonably received the siege train and ordnance supplies. The delay is to be ascribed to the enormously large outfit you required. If it was necessary, and despatch was used in procuring it, no one is in fault. If too large, you certainly should not regard as a reprehensible delay the time necessarily taken up in preparing it. To show that it was large, and required much time to procure it, I will select from many a single item. You demanded from eighty to one hundred thousand ten-inch shells, and forty or fifty mortars of like calibre. This enormous quantity of shells—about four thousand tons—was mostly to be manufactured after you left Washington. All the furnaces in the country, willing to engage in the business, were set to work; but, with the utmost diligence and despatch, the supply of this one article or even two-thirds of it, having to be manufactured and transported to the sea-board from the furnaces, (located in most instances in the interior of the country,) at a season of the year when water communications were obstructed by ice, could not be ready to be sent forward to you in many months after your departure from Washington. Had your requisitions been moderate—and undoubtedly moderate ones would have sufficed—they could have been furnished at a much earlier period.

The memorandum which you left "for the siege train and ammunition therefor," was submitted to me by the Ordnance

Department on the 26th of November, with an intimation that it could not be complied with in season for the expedition to go forward as early as you had contemplated. I endorsed upon it, "comply with the above as far as practicable," and this order, I am satisfied, after full examination, was faithfully executed.

What could be done at Washington, was promptly done. You had with you the Quartermaster General, with all the means at the command of the War Department, and with unrestricted authority to do whatever you might require. He was under your supervision, and subject to your orders, able and willing to execute them. You have never intimated that he in any respect failed in his duty; but on the contrary, you have spoken in highly commendatory terms of his efficient services.

I have already quoted your acknowledgment that he had taken all proper measures with judgment and promptitude to provide every thing depending on his department for the despatch and success of your expedition. In an issue of fact between you and the head of the War Department, his testimony, in connection with your own confession, is the best that can be offered to correct your misstatements and to refute your charges.

In his letter to me of the 2d of January, 1847, he says: "General Scott left for the interior on the 29th ultimo, and I am taking active measures to have everything depending upon me ready for his operations. The Quartermaster's department, I find, is called upon to do a great deal that should be done by other branches of the staff. So far as Gen. Scott's operations go, I shall have every thing done that is necessary, whether it belongs to my department or to other departments to do it."

You had with you, and subject to your orders, not only the Quartermaster General, but officers of the other staff departments. They did not look to the War Department, but to yourself, for directions; and it was your duty, and not mine, to see that your requirements were complied with. That they were so, to the utmost practical extent, I have no reason to doubt; but if they were not, the fault, if any, is not with the War Department.—You also gave the instructions in relation to providing the means of land transportation, and the officers charged with that duty were under your immediate control; and if there is blame anywhere for and deficiency in this respect it cannot be imputed to the War Department. Your whole correspondence with me, and the staff officers with you, shows that you very properly took upon yourself the whole charge of giving directions in this matter. In a letter to Capt. Hetzel, senior Quartermaster at the Brazos, speaking on this subject of the land transportation which may be needed after the descent on the enemy's coast near Vera Cruz, you say, "I have already discussed and arranged with you the detail of the EARLY land transportation train," &c. On the 19th of March, you furnished General Jesup with your estimates and directions on this subject. The staff officers being with you, and under your orders, nothing further was, or properly could be, required or expected to emanate from Washington, beyond the supply of funds; and, this being done, if you were disappointed in not realizing your expectations, you have not a colorable pretence for imputing blame to "the head of the War Department."

As a just ground of complaint, and a matter of accusation, you refer to your deficiency of means to make the descent, and to capture the city of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, and assume that the extent of that deficiency was the difference between what you received and what you required. It would be quite as correct reasoning to say, that what you had having proved sufficient for the purpose, that difference showed the extent of the errors in your estimate. The truth lies, perhaps, between the two extremes. You had less, probably, than you should have had, and you required much more than was necessary. That you did not have more, and, indeed, all you asked for, I have already shown was not the fault of the War Department.

Gen. Jesup was with you at Vera Cruz, saw your means, and is capable of forming an estimate of their sufficiency. He is, as his letter herewith shows, disposed to be just, and even generous to your fame. To his opinion on this subject, no well-founded exception can be taken. He says, in reference to your complaints on account of a deficient supply of surf-boats, siege train and ordnance stores: "The result shows that he (Gen. Scott) had surf boats and stores enough!" And of the delay of which you complain, he fully exonerates the War Department, and ascribes the whole to yourself, and to unavoidable accidents. The imputation that you were designedly crippled in your means, is a charge as preposterous as it is unfounded. I am aware that the execution of some of the many arrangements for the Vera Cruz expedition was obstructed and delayed by accidents, but they were such as common sagacity could not foresee, or human agency control. They were not, however, more than a considerate mind, bringing into view all the difficulties of the case, would have expected. When your

complaints on this subject were first received here, evincing, as they did, that you intended to hold the department responsible for every untoward event, the heads of the several bureaus were called on by me to show how they had executed the duties which had been confided to them, particularly in regard to matters referred to by you. The evidence they presented of having done all that was required, or could have been expected, convinced me—and I venture to say that, on a full examination, it will satisfy any mind open to conviction—that all your complaints, so far as they imputed blame to the War Department, or any of its branches, are unfounded. It will do much more—it will show that great industry, promptness, uncommon capacity, and extraordinary exertions, in relation to every thing connected with the war, have characterized the action of each of these subordinate departments. As a commendation justly merited by these several branches of the department, assailed as they are indirectly by you, I see no good reason for withholding my opinion, that an instance cannot be found where so much has been done, and well done, in so short a time, by any similar body of officers under similar circumstances.

As you have, by implication, laid a heavy hand upon the bureau which is charged with the onerous duties of executing the laws and orders for raising and sending forward the recruits & levies, I feel bound to affirm that you have done that branch of the public service the greatest injustice. No industry has been spared—no possible effort omitted—to raise the forces which were authorized, and to send them to their destination within the briefest practicable period. The numerous orders issued from the Adjutant General's office, and its voluminous correspondence on that subject, will sustain this assertion.

You have pressed with unwonted zeal the charge in relation to diverting the detachments of new regiments under Gen. Cadwalader's command to the Brazos, & have indulged in the wildest speculations as to the sad consequences which attended this imputed error. Assuming that my orders diverted these troops, or any others, (an assertion which I shall controvert hereafter,) the circumstances justified the measure. The critical condition of Gen. Taylor, according to all accounts received here at that time, is stated in my letter to you of the 22d of March. "To show that the departments acted properly, tho' it incurred your reproof, it is necessary to recall the facts as they then appeared here. They are presented in the following extract from that letter:

"The information which has just reached us in the shape of rumors, as to the situation of General Taylor, and the forces under his command, has excited the most painful apprehensions for their safety. It is almost certain that Santa Anna has precipitated the large army he had collected at San Luis de Potosi upon General Taylor; and it may be that the General has not been able to maintain the advanced position he had seen fit to take at Agua Nueva, but has been obliged to fall back on Monterey. It is equally certain that a Mexican force has been interposed between Monterey and the Rio Grande, and that it has interrupted the line of communication between the two places, and seized large supplies which were on the way to General Taylor's army."

If the hostile force between the Rio Grande and Gen. Taylor's army is as large as report represents it, our troops now on that river may not be able to re-establish the line, nor will it, perhaps, be possible to place a force there sufficient for the purpose, in time to prevent disastrous consequences to our army, unless aid can be afforded from the troops under your immediate command."

From one to two thousand of the new recruits for the ten regiments, from this quarter, will be on the way to the Brazos in the course of three or four days. All the other forces will be directed to that point, and every effort made to relieve Gen. Taylor from his critical situation. You will have been fully apprized before this can reach you of the condition of things in the valley of the Rio Grande, and at the headquarters of General Taylor, & have taken, I trust, such measures as the importance of the subject requires. I need not urge upon you the fatal consequences which would result from any serious disaster which might befall the army under General Taylor, nor do I doubt that you will do what is in your power to avert such a calamity."

The course pursued by the War Department on that occasion, which you convert into a charge, must, on revision, I think, commend itself to general approbation.—Had it been indifferent to the alarming condition of Gen. Taylor's army, and forborne to use, at the earliest moment, the most energetic measures to guard against the fatal consequences of its defeat, then too probable, it would have deserved an arraignment as severe as that which you have made against it for having done its duty in that critical emergency. When you first received the reasons assigned for the course adopted here, they appear to have been satisfactory. In your despatch of the 28th of April, you say: "Yesterday I learned, by your letter of the 22d, and the Adjutant General's of the 26th ult., that all the recruits of the regiments—some 3,000—raised or likely to be raised in time for this army, have been ordered to the Rio Grande." You did not then intimate the slightest dissatisfaction—not even a premonitory symptom of that deep distress with which, instantly on Mr. Triest's arrival in Mexico, you represent yourself to have been seized. It is a coincidence not unworthy of notice, that the letter containing your first condemnatory remark on this subject was written on the day of the date of Mr. Triest's first note to you, and only the day before your captious reply to it; and in both you assail the War Department. Your with-

ering disappointment seems to have slumbered for ten days, and then to have been aroused by the appearance of Mr. Triest in Mexico and your quarrel with him. If the order from the War Department had in fact "diverted" the forces with Gen. Cadwalader, still it was fully justified by the threatening aspect of affairs on the Rio Grande; but I am quite sure it did not divert them. No previous order from the department had designated any other place of rendezvous than the Brazos for the troops that were to join your column. It was well understood, before you left Washington, that all the troops for both armies were to be sent to that place, and there to fall under your command.

This arrangement was not nor was it expected that it would be here changed, until you had penetrated so far into the enemy's country as to render your communications with that place of general rendezvous difficult and dilatory.

You also complain that the order was not countermanded. If there had been such an order, and it had been countermanded, what would have been the consequence? The troops would have gone forward from the United States under the former orders of the department, which would have taken them to the same place.

You allege that "the news of the victory of Buena Vista reached Washington in time to countermand Cadwalader's orders for the Rio Grande before his departure from New Orleans. I notice this specification of neglect of duty, to show the extent to which you have carried your fault-finding, and the industry with which you have searched for occasions to indulge it."

Your assumption is, that the news of the victory of Buena Vista should have satisfied the War Department that Cadwalader's forces were not needed on the Rio Grande; and the omission to countermand, as soon as that news was received, the orders to send them there, was a neglect deserving severe animadversion. How did you act under similar circumstances? With better means of information as to the actual condition of the Rio Grande frontier, after the victory of Buena Vista, you did not deem it prudent, after being forty-one days in possession of the news of that victory, to issue positive orders to remove a single man from that frontier; yet you venture to censure me for not having sent the troops away the moment the news reached Washington.

You received information of that victory on or before the 14th of March, for on that day you proclaimed it in orders to your army. On the 25th day of April, more than forty days thereafter, you issued an order to the commanding officer at the Brazos to embark for Vera Cruz, "such detachments of the new regiments as may have been ordered by the War Department to Point Isabel;" but you made it conditional with reference to the safety of the line of the Rio Grande; and said to that officer, that you relied upon his "sound judgment to determine on the spot whether that line would not be too much exposed by the withdrawal of the troops in question." Thus it appears that you do not hesitate to impute neglect of duty to me, for not having adopted and acted on the conclusion that the line of the Rio Grande was safe the moment I heard of the victory of Buena Vista; but, when acting on the same subject, you dared not adopt that conclusion, although you had been in possession of the same information forty-one days. Your own conduct in this matter completely refutes this charge of yours against the War Department. It does more; it shows how rash and inconsiderate you have been in selecting topics for attack.

But the most serious consequences are attributed to the long delay of these troops at the Brazos. For your sake, I sincerely hope these consequences are much exaggerated, because I am quite confident it will be shown that you alone are responsible for the delay. The War Department did not—and it was proper that it should not—issue any order in regard to the movement of the troops after their arrival in Mexico. The order from the department of the 30th of April, making a division of the new levies between the two columns, does not contradict this assertion, for these levies were then mostly within the United States; only portions of them had reached Mexico. Until this order took effect, the troops at the Brazos, and, indeed, on the Rio Grande and with Gen. Taylor, were under your entire and unrestricted command. As to this matter, you were under no misapprehension; for on the 25th of April, before you were informed what had been done here to secure the Rio Grande line, you issued an order in relation to the troops at the Brazos. This place, you well knew, was the general rendezvous of the new levies from the United States, and before you sailed on your expedition to Vera Cruz, you were notified that the Mexican army were advancing upon Gen. Taylor. To have assumed that you had not left at the Brazos, with a view to meet any probable contingency, orders for the proper disposition of the troops which were, or might be sent there, would have implied an opinion that you wanted suitable qualifications for the high station which had been assigned to you.

These troops were a part of your command, and subject to your orders; and if