

Death of General Persifer F. Smith.

The unexpected announcement of the death of Brevet Major-General PERSIFER F. SMITH will occasion a very general expression of regret. General SMITH had but just been appointed to the command of the army of Utah, and was preparing to march from Fort Leavenworth, when suddenly cut off by the complaint which has for some time rendered him an invalid, but which, it was hoped, had been so far conquered as to admit of his return to active service. A telegraphic dispatch announces that his death occurred at head-quarters at Fort Leavenworth on Sunday night.

PERSIFER FRAZZER SMITH was born in Philadelphia in November, 1798. He was a son of JONATHAN SMITH, formerly cashier of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and afterwards cashier of the Bank of the United States. The maternal grandfather of General SMITH was PERSIFER FRAZZER, who was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Revolutionary Army. General SMITH was bred to the law. After graduating with honor at Princeton he entered the law office of Mr. CHARLES CHAUNCEY, in Philadelphia, and upon his admission removed to New-Orleans, where he continued to practice his profession until the breaking out of the Florida War, in 1836, when he volunteered his services, and held command of the Louisiana Volunteers. The military talent, which he possessed in an unusual degree, there became developed, and his bravery and ability obtained for him the favorable regard of his superiors in command. General (then Colonel) ZACHARY TAYLOR, in particular, formed a high estimate of his abilities, and took occasion to recommend him to the attention of the War Department, as a capable and deserving officer. Gen. TAYLOR rarely made mistakes, and did not fall into a blunder in this case. From the date of their first acquaintance, until the death of General TAYLOR, the two officers were warm personal friends. At the solicitation of General TAYLOR the command of the new regiment of Mounted Riflemen, which was raised at the commencement of the Mexican War, was conferred upon General SMITH. His entrance into the Regular Army, and commission as Colonel of this Regiment, date from May 27, 1846.

At the opening of the war in Mexico, Col. SMITH was attached to Gen. TAYLOR's division, and was distinguished for bravery and coolness in the field. The fierce battle of Monterey brought out the full energies of the man, and developed the abilities of the officer; and for his service on that day he was breveted Brigadier General. He remained with Gen. TAYLOR until the expedition to Vera Cruz was determined upon, when he was one of the officers detailed for service under Gen. SCOTT. This was the period when TAYLOR, reduced to great straits by the order withdrawing some of his best troops, fell into that fit of rage, which has not passed from the memory of readers of the history of that memorable campaign. Among those with whom TAYLOR was loth to part, was Gen. SMITH.

After joining the army under SCOTT, illness prevented Gen. SMITH from taking an active part in the conflicts that marked the passage of the army from Vera Cruz to Contreras. The battle which occurred at the latter point, however, was one where he assumed a position so prominent that the engagement has become indissolubly connected with his name. In his official report of this battle, Gen. SCOTT spoke of Gen. SMITH in these complimentary terms: "He closely directed the whole attack in front with his habitual coolness and ability." This was the first of the great battles fought in the Valley of Mexico, and the success of the Americans was justly attributed to a movement planned by Gen. SMITH, for turning the enemy's left and gaining their rear; a manœuvre which proved entirely successful and gained the day for the Americans. On the day of the capture of Contreras, the battle of Churubusco was fought, and Gen. SMITH was also conspicuous in that conflict. Subsequently he was appointed, with other officers, to negotiate the Armistice. At the resumption of hostilities he participated in the affair of Chapultepec, and was in active service at the capture of the City of Mexico. His conduct at the battle of Contreras procured his promotion to the rank of Major General by brevet, dating from the 20th of August, 1847.

At the conclusion of the War Gen. SMITH was ordered to California, where he held command of the Military Department; and he afterwards held a similar command in Texas. For several years past, he had been in command of the Department of the West, with Head-quarters at St. Louis. This Department includes the country West of the Mississippi, and East of the Rocky Mountains, exclusive of the District included in the Departments of Texas and New-Mexico.

On the 15th of April last, Gen. SMITH was assigned to the command of the Department of Utah, and of the troops destined for it, according to his brevet rank. Brevet Brigadier-General WM. S. HARNEY was at the same time appointed second in command, and now succeeds Gen. SMITH in the command of the Utah army.

Since his service in Texas, General SMITH had suffered greatly from a chronic diarrhoea, which enfeebled his frame and incapacitated him for severe labor. It was with some hesitation he ventured to assume the arduous duties of the command in Utah, and his departure was delayed on this account for several weeks. Possessed, however, of an indomitable energy, and cherishing a hope that his disease had assumed more favorable symptoms, he undertook the commission. His cadaverous countenance and wasted form occasioned alarm among the friends who saw him recently at Carlisle, whither he was summoned as a member of the Court Martial on Col. SUMNER. His natural vivacity, however, did not forsake him. He was an agreeable gentleman as well as a gallant officer, and gathered about him troops of attached and faithful friends. He leaves a widow and one son, Dr. HOWARD SMITH, of New-Orleans, the offspring of his first marriage.