



BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES SHIELDS.

Acting Major-General JAMES SHIELDS is a native of the county of Tyrone, in Ireland, where he was born in the year 1810. He is consequently about fifty-two years of age. He first came to this country in the year 1826, being then only sixteen years of age. In 1832 he went West, and settled in Kaskasia, one of the oldest villages of Illinois, where he devoted himself to the study and practice of the law. He was soon after elected to the State Legislature, and in 1839 was made State Auditor. Four years later he was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court, and in 1845, having received from President Polk the appointment of Commissioner of the General Land Office, he removed to Washington. Upon the breaking out of the Mexican war during the following year, the same President appointed Mr. SHIELDS a Brigadier-General of United States Volunteers. His commission was dated July 1, 1846. He was present at the siege of Vera Cruz, and was particularly noted. At the battle of Cerro Gordo he distinguished himself greatly, and the second time shed his blood in defence of his adopted country.

Severely wounded, he continued on the field, urging on his men, until a ball passing through his lungs struck him down. He was carried from the battle field, and was reported so near death that obituary notices appeared of the gallant Colonel in nearly all the papers of the country. It appears that he was entirely given over by the Army Surgeons, when a Mexican Doctor said he would live if he would let him remove the coagulated blood from the wound. SHIELDS told him to try, and a fine silk handkerchief was worked and finally drawn through the wound, removing the extravasated blood, when daylight could be seen through the hole. And yet SHIELDS to-day is a hale and hearty man, free from disease or any inconvenience from his wound, which was considered at the time as mortal, having been made by a large copper ball, and going directly through his body and lungs. For his gallant and meritorious conduct on this occasion, he was in August, 1848, breveted a Major-General of Volunteers. Still suffering from his wounds we find him commanding a brigade in the valley of Mexico, consisting of a battalion of marines and regiments composed of New York and South Carolina volunteers. He was also in the battle of Chapultepec, where, being unhorsed, he fought on foot, bareheaded and in his shirt sleeves, leading his brigade, sword in hand, with a bravery that has made his name remarka-

ble in American history. He was again wounded, and that dangerously, but with care and a good constitution he recovered. His brigade, after performing various deeds, ending in the capture of the city of Mexico, was disbanded on the 20th of July, 1848. The war being ended, General SHIELDS laid down the sword, and assumed once more his place in civil life. He was brilliantly received on his arrival in the United States, and when he returned to the State of his choice (Illinois) he was elected to fill the position vacated by Mr. BREEZE—that of Senator from that State—to represent it in the Capitol at Washington. This was in the year 1849. Owing to some technicality he was refused admission as a Senator, when he promptly resigned the post, and was as promptly re-elected. He returned to Washington, and for six years proved himself to be as able in council as he was on the battle-field.

In 1855 he left the Senate, leaving at the same time Illinois, and went to settle on the lands awarded to him for his services in the army, which lands he had selected in the Territory of Minnesota. When that tract became a State General SHIELDS was returned to represent it in Congress as a Senator, and took his seat after its admission in May, 1858. General SHIELDS having drawn the short term, he had to vacate his seat in 1859, and, not securing a re-election, he went further west into California. From his retirement he was again brought out by the present war, having been appointed by Congress a Brigadier-General, with a commission dating from August 19, 1861.

This commission he at first declined, but, deeming it his duty to stand by his adopted country in her troubles, he came forth, and, after a long voyage, reached the capital, where (his name, in consequence of his refusal, having been stricken from the army list) he waited some time before he obtained a command. The lamented death of General LANDER left that Division without a head, and General SHIELDS was at once appointed to the command, with the rank of Brigadier-General, his division forming part of the *corps d'armée* of Major-General BANKS. He has again brought himself before the public by his gallant acts, has again been wounded upon the battle field, and once more our country rings with the name of "General SHIELDS."

General SHIELDS is of good personal appearance, about five feet eight inches in stature, with dark complexion. His style of speaking is easy, fluent and agreeable.