

of the city by our troops, upon the evening of the second day of attack.

I cannot refrain, on the present occasion, from expressing a wish that Congress may do something for our gallant band, who have, under such adverse circumstances and disparity of forces, carried, at the point of the bayonet, the enemy's outposts, and so nobly upheld and maintained the honor of the American nation. I must not forget to state that we have captured about 130 *deserters*—traitors to their country—who, I am informed are now undergoing a trial; and, in God's name, I ardently wish they may all share that fate they so richly deserve, and be hung by the neck until they are dead, dead, dead.

I am, very truly, yours,

LEONIDAS.

MIXCOAC, MEXICO, August 27, 1847,  
Three miles from the capital.

*Editors Delta—Gentlemen:*

I beg leave to hand you the annexed account of our engagement with the enemy, which commenced on the 19th instant, at a strongly fortified position, about four miles west of San Augustin.

This engagement with the enemy commenced on the 19th instant, by the 3d division, under the immediate command of Major General Pillow, comprising a force of 3,500. The enemy had 16,000, of whom 5,000 were cavalry, and twenty seven pieces of artillery.

General Pillow's order for the attack was, that General Twiggs should advance, with one brigade of his division, and assault the enemy's strong work in front, while the other should turn his left wing, and assail the works in *reverse*. He also placed, at the disposition of General Twiggs, Captain Magruder's battery, and Lieutenant Callender's howitzers, [both of which belong to the proper division of General Pillow.] Having thus opened the battle, he then advanced General Cadwalader's brigade to support the brigade of Colonel Riley, who had moved to turn the enemy's left, and attack in *reverse*; and advanced General Pierce's brigade to support General Smith, who had advanced to assault the work in front. The action had now become, with the advancing forces, very severe; and General Pillow, seeing five or six thousand men advancing from the city to reinforce the enemy, whom he apprehended would fall upon General Cadwalader's rear, detached, from General Pierce's brigade, Colonel Morgan's regiment, which was yet within reach, and ordered it instantly to the support of General Cadwalader, who, seeing so large a force approaching his rear, threatening to overwhelm him, halted his forward movement, confronted the enemy, in a strong position, and held him completely at bay. The forces under General Smith, Colonel Riley, and General Pierce were hotly engaged with the enemy's strong battery and large force of infantry and cavalry, until it was quite dark. Magruder's battery and Callender's howitzer battery were both much cut to

pieces, and disabled. Late in the evening General Scott came upon the field, and brought with him General Shields's brigade of volunteers, whom he advanced to the support of the forces then under General Cadwalader; but it was so late they did not get into position until in the night. The next morning, before daylight, the brigade of General Pierce advanced, in execution of the original order of battle, renewed the assault in front; while Colonel Riley's brigade, supported by General Cadwalader, turned his left, assailed the enemy's works in reverse, and most gallantly carried it—capturing a large force of the enemy, twenty-two guns, (among them, those lost at the battle of Buena Vista,) and killing and wounding, in the general engagement, between twenty-six and twenty-eight hundred of the enemy.

Having achieved this signal and brilliant victory, General Pillow immediately resolved to pursue the retreating forces of the enemy, and while his troops were flushed with victory, give battle to a large force said still to be in San Angel, which he did, and drove them before him. He then sent an officer of his staff back to General Scott to say to him, if he would cause General Worth to co-operate with him, he would sweep around the valley, and assault the strong works of San Antonio in the reverse, and carry that place, so as to open the direct route to the capital for the advance of his siege train, upon the other battery on that road. General Scott replied that Worth should co-operate with him. General Pillow then moved rapidly around the valley at the head of his victorious forces, until he reached Cuycua, within one mile of San Antonio, where he halted to allow his troops a short time to recover their breath and almost exhausted strength, before engaging the enemy at San Antonio. While waiting for this purpose, General Scott overtook the army. At this moment, it was discovered in the distance that the enemy, seeing their main work had been carried, and that they were about to be attacked in the rear, had abandoned the work of San Antonio, and fallen back upon a second strong work at Churubusco. General Scott, who now assumed command for the first time, immediately ordered General Twiggs's division to advance upon the left, and arrest and cut off the retreating forces of the enemy, and assault the strong work at this place on the right, while he ordered General Pillow to lead Cadwalader's brigade, and assault the enemy upon the left and in front of the main work at the bridge or causeway. Twiggs's division soon became desperately engaged with the enemy's right at Churubusco. Pillow's division, in the effort to get to the battle ground, were compelled to wade waist deep in mud and water, the general, dismounting from his horse and plunging through, called upon his column to follow him, which they did with great ardor. He advanced rapidly with it, in front of the enemy's main work, and finding it would be cut down by the terrible fire of grape and cannister, which swept down the road, he turned it into the field on the right, to attack the main battery on its left flank. Here his forces and Worth's were joined, and went forward and gallantly carried this work.

During this great battle, which lasted two days, General Pillow was in command of all the forces engaged, except General Worth's division, and this was not engaged, except in taking the last work. General Scott gave but one order, and that was to reinforce General Cadwalader's brigade. The position the enemy's battery occupied was a height commanding the only road passing through a wide plain, covered over with lava stone, which was rent into deep chasms and fissures, so as to be almost impassable even for infantry. It was entirely so for all other purposes. In this position the enemy had entrenched twenty-nine pieces of heavy artillery, which swept the approach in every direction. The enemy's reinforcements increased their force 16,000, about 5,000 of which were cavalry. A stronger position could not have been selected, and a more powerful battery was perhaps never so successfully assailed.

The necessity of attacking this work and carrying it had become manifest, as the army had been marching through marshes and almost impassable roads, nearly half around the city, to find some points upon the enemy's works that could be successfully assailed. Three main works, commanding causeways leading to the capital, had been reconnoitred; and were found so strongly fortified, and defended by such a weight of heavy artillery, that to risk an assault would have been to endanger our whole army. The subsistence of the army had now become considerably reduced and nearly exhausted. It could move no further around the city to reach other causeways, as the mountain now intercepted our route by projecting so far into the lake as to connect itself nearly with the right of the great work at San Antonio. Something had to be done—the prospect before us was extremely gloomy. To reach the great work at Contreras, which was carried by the forces under General Smith, a road had to be opened through the gorge of the mountain. It was to open this road, and to drive the enemy and carry this battery, strong as it was known to be, that General Pillow was ordered out by General Scott. The general's plan of battle, and the disposition of his forces, were most judicious and successful.

*He evinced on this, as he has done on other occasions, that masterly military genius and profound knowledge of the science of war, which has astonished so much the mere martinet of the profession. His plan was very similar to that by which Napoleon effected the reduction of the fortress of Ulm, and General Scott was so perfectly well pleased with it, that he could not interfere with any part of it, but left it to the gallant projector to carry it into glorious and successful execution.* In this battle, with about 4,500 men, our army engaged an enemy with a force of 16,000, occupying a position which could only be reached with extreme difficulty by infantry, with entrenched works commanding the approach to it for a mile round in every direction, with, as I have before observed, twenty-nine pieces of artillery. The victory was most brilliant and complete. Nothing could have been better planned than this battle. I must relate an interesting and exciting incident that occurred during the rage of the battle. A Mexican officer being seen by one of General Pillow's aids to leave the enemy's lines, and to advance several yards nearer our

position, the general, as soon as he heard of the impudent rashness of the Mexican, put spurs to his charger and galloped at full speed towards him. As soon as he got near to the Mexican, the general called out in Spanish, *saque su sable para defenderse*—let the honor and prowess of our respective countries be determined by the issue of this combat. Straightway the Mexican drew his sword with one hand and balanced his lance in the other, and rushed towards our general, who, with a revolver in one hand and his sabre in the other, waited the onset of the Mexican. The combat was a long and a severe one. The Mexican was a large, muscular man, and handled his arms with great vigor and skill, but our general was his superior in dexterity and coolness. At last the Mexican made one terrible charge at our general with his lance, which the latter evaded with great promptitude and avidity, using his sword, tossed the weapon of the Mexican high into the air, and then quietly blew his brains out with his revolver. Both the American and Mexican armies witnessed this splendid effort. [The above incident was published in italics in the New Orleans Picayune.]

In the two battles, the enemy had about thirty thousand men engaged in deadly conflict. Their total loss in killed, wounded, and missing, is near seven thousand, according to their own estimate, including one thousand six hundred prisoners, eight of whom are general officers, and about eighty-four of an inferior grade, captains, lieutenants, &c. Our loss in killed and wounded is about one thousand two hundred; among the dead is the gallant Colonel Butler, of South Carolina, who, until the first day's fight, (from a severe attack of sickness,) was unable to mount his horse; but the thunder of the enemy's guns nerved him for the conflict, and three cheers were given him as he passed into battle. No one laments his death more than the writer of this communication, who ate with him the last meal of which he partook prior to his death.

The foregoing account of this unparalleled victory I was myself an eye witness to, and will vouch for its correctness; and nothing but an order from the commander-in-chief prevented the occupancy of the city by our troops upon the evening of the second day of attack. I cannot refrain, on the present occasion, from expressing a wish that Congress may do something for our gallant band, who have, under such adverse circumstances and disparity of forces, carried, at the point of the bayonet, the enemy's outposts, and so nobly upheld and maintained the honor of the American nation. I must not forget that we have captured about one hundred and thirty *deserters*, traitors to their country, who, I am informed, are now undergoing a trial, and in God's name, I ardently wish they may all share that fate they so richly deserve, and be hung by the neck until they are dead, dead, dead.

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