

accompanied with unusual sorrow and mourning for many of its noblest spirits.

The general then began his preparations for a final attack. He ordered a depot of sick and wounded, of captured artillery, &c., including prisoners, to be established at a small village called Mixcoac, to the right of Tacubaya, through which he had passed in coming from Coyoacan; and in front of this village, at a place called Piedad, he posted a division to threaten the city in that direction. Immediately there was seen an immense number of laborers busily engaged, night and day, in fortifying the causeways, by which the city was accessible from the Piedad. It was wonderful to see the activity with which they worked.

At the end of three or four days the fortifications in that direction seemed very complete, and lined with artillery and men.

It was evident that the enemy looked upon that as the contemplated place of attack, and for this very reason, perhaps, the general made his arrangements to attack, not there on the right, but at Chapultepec on his left, but still he kept up a show of attack from the Piedad. On the morning of the 12th of September the firing commenced from three or four batteries upon Chapultepec, but no show of force was made, and the enemy thought it a feint, keeping his principal force in the direction of the Piedad. The firing continued all day on both sides with very little effect.

It was resumed the next morning, and continued about two hours, when it ceased, by order of the general, the cessation being the signal or time determined for the advance of two assaulting parties of 250 men each, supported by strong columns, the artillery resuming its fire as soon as the movement was in full operation, and in about an hour the heights were ascended by our troops, and the scaling ladders being placed against the walls, our intrepid officers and soldiers passed over into the main work, driving the enemy either out of the work altogether, or into buildings where they surrendered at discretion. The enemy, during the night of the 12th, had sent additional force to defend Chapultepec, though evidently at a loss to know where the real attack was to be made. The defence, however, was desperate, the fight being maintained at a multitude of points in the woods near the hill, at batteries and breastworks at the base of the hill, and from various points and different positions on the sides of the hill. This fight was, on the whole, one of the most remarkable that has occurred during the war.

But I design merely an outline. As the military school was at that place, the superintendent, professors, and students, became prisoners of war, with a large body of other officers and men, including the celebrated veteran General Bravo.

Chapultepec having fallen, our troops were directed in two columns along two causeways, one leading directly to the city, and the other to the left, to intersect the San Cosme causeway, and now the fight was resumed inch by inch upon each route, but the infantry of the enemy was driven, and his batteries taken in rapid succession along a distance, upon each causeway, of more than a mile and a half, and at night both columns had made a lodgement within the gates of the capital.

Our force at Piedad was not occupied on either of the two days. A field battery opened its fire upon the enemy, and movements were made as if to attack in that direction, thus occupying the enemy, already strongly in the belief that the real attack was to be there, but after Chapultepec was taken, and our forces had nearly penetrated the city, the force was withdrawn from Piedad, and sent to the support of one of the attacking columns in the city. The deeds of valor by our troops on this day, as on previous occasions, deserve to be recorded by a Tacitus, or a Livy, or a Thucydides, and therefore we do not attempt it.

The general, after directing in person the entire operations of the day, giving the most minute and exact instructions for every movement, finally returned, after dark, to Tacubaya, where he was called upon in the night, towards morning, by a deputation from the city council, with information that General Santa Anna had left the city and withdrawn the army, and they desired the general to give them some assurances or conditions before entering the city. This he declined doing, telling them, in substance, that he would agree to no conditions until he should first go into the city, and then only to such as should be self-imposed, but that his course would be such as the dignity and honor of the United States required.

At nine o'clock on the morning of the 14th of September, the general dismounted within the court of the national palace, and ascending the broad flight of stairs to the saloons above, sat down and wrote a brief order, announcing his occupation of the capital of Mexico.

[Extract.]

SAN ANTONIO, August 19.

Yesterday we commenced firing upon the enemy with our cannon, and killed some men and horses. To-day, up to 12, m., we have fired but few shots, and the enemy are retreating, with the object, I suppose, of going to Tacubaya by the way of Pedrigal, [Contreras.] They have a long distance to march, and I do not know what will become of them in their unfortunate situation. Every day is a loss to them and a gain to us. The struggle will be severe but favorable to us, as the measures we have taken are very good, and they will not this time laugh in their beard, as they have on former occasions.

DN. P. J.

The following letter is from a member of the Mexican Congress, and is marked *private*:

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I have before me your welcome letter of the 10th instant, in which, among other things, you are pleased to

point out to me the reasons why you had suspended our correspondence. The idea you present to me, that I ought not to leave this place before having arranged every thing relative to that—, is a good one, but cannot be realized at present, owing to the afflicting circumstances which overwhelm us, everything being in the greatest disorder, and there being, in fact, no Congress, and government occupying itself only with matters of the war, and, absolutely, no other business can be attended to. In truth, this war is going to cease, as I suppose, because, on the 19th and 20th, at the gates of Mexico, our nation has covered itself with mourning and dishonor, and our generals and chiefs, in particular, with opprobrium. There is not even left to us the glory to say, with that French personage, well known in history, that "all is lost but our honor;" as our army has long since lost both honor and shame, which is not necessary to prove, when this capital groans with sorrow and anger against those who call themselves its defenders. The enemy, as yet, has not soiled, with his tread, the palaces of the Montezumas, but that is because a suspension of hostilities has caused him to pause in his triumphant march. This suspension, which has no other object than to collect the wounded and to bury the dead, as some say, has also another purpose, and that is to see the propositions of peace from the government of Washington, of which Mr. Nicholas Trist is the bearer. The actual government, that is to say, the President, who finds himself compromised before the nation, has sent a message to Congress, which I take to be a matter of mere form, that upon hearing the above mentioned propositions he would use only the powers belonging to him by the constitution. The Congress, besides the fact that it does not exist, there being assembled to-day but twenty-five deputies, as yet has nothing to do with the matter, so that the message of the President seems to me to be untimely; nevertheless, being so or not, Congress, as I said before, as it does not exist, can do nothing. From this I deduce, with other friends of the same opinion, the following results: that, the case being an urgent one, the enemy waiting an answer at the gates of the city, a meeting of Congress being impossible in order to review treaties which must be concluded, at the latest, next week, the executive is necessarily obliged to assume powers not conceded to it by the constitution, to wit: that of approving treaties after having made them. In a normal state of the country, this would be an assumption, and against law, so that the executive, in order to exercise this power, finds it necessary to use revolutionary means. Hence the necessity of a dictatorship, which is already announced to us, and I think but a few days will elapse before this will be realized. Be on the look out. If I learn anything more I will inform you of it. It is true that, if our army had been successful, we should have fallen under a dictatorship, about which our military chiefs have so much occupied themselves, and perhaps they were dreaming of that when they were all beaten; but, being beaten, the same hopes remain, with this difference, that, as they must have something to lean upon, that support, I suppose, will now be the Yankees. Be this as it may, I will soon ascertain and tell you. I

will not occupy myself in giving you a minute description of how the action was brought on, and how lost, nor will I give you a formal opinion of the motives of the parties; however, I will tell you what I hear from rational and well informed people. General Valencia, the rival of Santa Anna, wished the glory of defeating the enemy; but he needed assistance, which should have been sent him. Well, the battle once commenced, whether right or wrong, Santa Anna looked upon the rout of Valencia as a cold spectator, sending him no assistance; after which everything was disorder and rout on our part. You can make such commentaries as you please, but bear in mind, in order to make no mistakes, that our army was composed of twenty-four or twenty-five thousand men, and that of the enemy of only twelve thousand men, and that, after the actions of the 19th and 20th, our forces do not amount to over eleven thousand men, all of whom are frightened to death. Among the misfortunes which have befallen us, we have in the hands of the enemy many hundreds of prisoners, including the battalions of Independence and Bravo, the loss of Perdigan, Blanco, and Frontera, and other generals, and a great many killed. The ex-president, Anaya, and many others are prisoners, all of our artillery lost, and our regular troops dispersed or cut to pieces.

My friend, in all our misfortunes I do not note, as some people will have it, that there has been any treason or secret understanding, but I must say that there is great weakness and ignorance and very little honor shown on the part of our generals-in-chief. We must only look to God for the salvation of our country. I am pleased that you intend to enter into relationship with the ministers and with his excellency the president; but I must recommend that you be very respectful in your letters, that you touch their pride without adulation. The minister of T. says he will answer your note. No one knew of the intentions Valencia had; but after his rout it was said that, had he gained the victory, he would have overpowered Santa Anna and made himself dictator; for which purpose he had already named his ministers, and had promised the rank of general to several of his friends. Others say that Valencia was in league with the enemy; but this, to speak the truth, I cannot, and shall never, believe. However, the man (Valencia) who has been ordered to be shot by Santa Anna has escaped through the State of Mexico, which government has received him well, which I do not understand.

Should there be a dictatorship or not, you must be very vigilant and take care of our interests, that is to say, should our territory not be benefitted, that we shall not lose. I have heard it announced that the States of Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas, &c., wish to make a separate republic, but I do not know what to think, Colina; on which account it would be necessary for them to think us instruments (tools) to be cheated; others say that those States which are against the army will annex themselves, together with other States of the north, to the United States of America.

[Here follows much miscellaneous and private matter.]

[NOTE.—The first sheet of the original of this letter was lost.]

* * * Scott, a man of superior talents in the art of war, as it appears, considering the position of Valencia very advantageous, established a small portion of his troops in a ravine very near our batteries, from whence he could use his muskets to advantage without injury from us, he, Scott, having no artillery. Afterwards, he sent a column, with three light pieces of artillery, to take a position on the heights on the right of Valencia's camp, and another body of troops on the left of Valencia, in order to flank this general. At about 6 o'clock in the morning, (of the 20th of August,) he obtained his object, having troops concealed on both flanks of Valencia, and a very few in front, with a number of wagons, to call the attention of Valencia that way.

The column which, on the previous afternoon, had taken position on the right of Valencia, Scott ordered should get into the rear during the night, and the body of troops that were in front of Valencia the same afternoon were divided, one part of which took the right of Valencia; and, in the mean time, he had sent reinforcements to the body stationed on the left, obliging his soldiers to cross a river half body (up to the waist) deep. In this manner Valencia, during the night, was entirely cut off, and, at 6 o'clock the next morning, he was attacked at the same time in the front, in the rear, and on both flanks. The engagement lasted about two hours, the result of which was that all our artillery was lost, with the entire train, ammunition, and all; a great many killed and wounded, and those who were not made prisoners were entirely dispersed. On the afternoon of the day previous, Valencia, seeing that he was in danger of being flanked, asked assistance of Santa Anna, who ordered him to retire immediately, but he, Valencia, did not retire, probably because he considered victory possible. Valencia did not send for reinforcements once, but several times, on all which occasions he was refused by Santa Anna, and the order to retire was repeated; on account of which, after the unfortunate result of the engagement, Santa Anna ordered this general to be shot for disobedience. Some assure us there is foundation for this order, for Valencia was very obstinate, and thereby caused the loss of the whole army; still, others do not think so, as, having behaved with valor, saves him from all discreditable imputations.

My opinion is that Santa Anna should have sent Valencia reinforcements, and should have procured a victory by any means, and after that chastised him for his disobedience of orders. In this manner he would have rendered an important service to the nation, and it would have been a salutary example for generals-in-chief in future. Scott, having destroyed our best troops, the flower of the army, then proceeded with his forces and attacked the main army immediately afterwards, that is to say, those stationed at San Antonio and Churubusco and Mexicalcingo, thereby effecting, in one single day, the destruction of an army of more than thirty thousand men. This North American general, in a strange country, has

fought us in detail and destroyed our large army, a thing which our general should have done with respect to his army.

It is now 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and the enemy has sent in an intimation allowing 48 hours for the evacuation of this city, so that their (his) troops may occupy it. Our troops, which with great difficulty have been brought together, do not exceed eight or nine thousand men, with which we can do nothing, as they have lost their *morale*.

The companies of Bravo and Independence, with the exception of a few killed, are prisoners. Generals Salas and Gorostiza are prisoners, as also others whose names I do not recollect. As yet, I hear of the death of only General Mehia and of Frontera, colonel of cavalry. It is also said, but not certainly, that Perdigan was killed. I have just been told that Bravo is a prisoner, and also Anaya.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

J. C.—MY MUCH LOVED AND RESPECTED FRIEND: The enemy made his appearance, on the 12th, near the Peñon, which place they did not appear disposed to attack, it being too well fortified, and they went around by the way of Chalco. On the 16th, they made their appearance at San Augustin Tlalpam, and Valencia immediately took position on the hills of Contreras, near the town of San Angel, with his brilliant division, brought by him from San Luis Potosi, in number 6,000 men, perfectly well equipped, and furnished with 24 pieces of cannon. This was a precaution taken by government, as no one thought that the Americans would take the road from San Augustin to Contreras, as it is over a *pedrigal*. I do not know whether you are acquainted with the road, but even those who go over it on foot encounter a thousand obstacles. [*Pedrigal* means volcanic grounds exceedingly broken, full of sharp stones, rising almost into precipices, and broken into immense chasms.] Part of the Americans went down to the hacienda of Coapa, and Santa Anna thought fit to place troops at San Antonio in order to impede their progress that way. Things remained in this position until Thursday, the 19th, when the Americans, having overcome the obstacles of the *pedrigal*, presented themselves in front of Valencia, who gave them a hard fight, having confidence, owing to the past, in the valor of his troops; but, on the morning of the 20th, about ten minutes after 6, he found himself attacked by the enemy, who destroyed all his division, took all of his artillery, and over twenty thousand dollars he had for the payment of his troops.

This great disaster was increased in the afternoon at about 3, when the Yankees took the well fortified point at Churubusco, causing a great many deaths, and taking a great number of prisoners. You can imagine our state in the capital under such repeated misfortunes; the more so, as all of our troops are dispersed, and we are momentarily expecting an attack upon the capital. We are lost, Mr. J., and, in my opinion, there is no hope of repa-