

Whilst this was going on the fight commenced at Churubusco, under the immediate orders of Santa Anna, but as at this place there was no artillery, and no other troops but those of the national guards, (Bravo's and Independence,) the enemy easily cut them to pieces before fresh troops arrived, not even giving us sufficient time to use the artillery brought from San Antonio. Moreover, the fresh troops did not find ammunition in readiness, on account of which the 11th regiment of the line retired to Mexicalcingo, without having engaged in the fight. Finally, my friend, the bridge of Churubusco was lost almost without resistance, and at a great sacrifice. The bridge was lost before the advance of the retreating troops arrived at the garita of Mexico. The passage at the garita was very narrow, owing to the parapets, and made more difficult by a wagon which had been broken down in the road. The bridge once lost, a party of American cavalry, small in number, drove before them a thousand of our horsemen—then drove before them the retreating infantry, and the confusion became general. Under these circumstances, the small garrison at the garita fired rather upon our own men than upon the enemy. This will give you an idea of the disorder which reigned throughout this retreat. However, the enemy's cavalry still advanced up to the very ditches, and one officer, horse and all, jumped into our parapet—another was captured and made prisoner, while we saw two or three of their cavalry fall.

Whilst our troops were running into the city, dispersing in all directions, filled with terror, and crying that the enemy was coming in immediately after them, the enemy halted without the city, and every thing is to-day tranquil on both sides, probably owing to an armistice obtained by the English minister, or rather a capitulation, abandoning the city to the enemy, upon which the English minister and our minister of foreign relations had a talk, at about one o'clock last night.

Congress has been ordered to meet, but it must fail. A great many of the members are absent.

I have only recited what I know from ocular witnesses, separating the credible from the incredible.

I conclude from want of time, and because both the pen and writer are used up.

Good bye, my friend; and I hope that God will not permit you to witness as many misfortunes as your friend.

His Excellency M. O.

L. V.

Don J. P. F:

[After detailing the events, as usual, down to the midst of the fight at Churubusco, the writer goes on to say:]

The cavalry was ordered to make a charge, but these cowards refused to do it—nevertheless the action was well sustained, but

the Yankees advanced their right wing as far as the edge of the river, so that the river only separated us from them—then our infantry in front dispersed, and at their example the fortifications in front [on the road, i. e., the *tête de pont*,] were abandoned, afterwards the right, [i. e., Churubusco,] when it saw itself alone—and then the retreat became a dispersion, the enemy following close upon the rear guard, even to the very ditches of the garita [gate.] At twenty yards from the garita there was an American officer killed, who was about to kill Santa Anna with his sword. This is the history of the battles.

The *morale* of the army has been lost, and all enthusiasm extinguished; nevertheless the enemy has lost about 2,000 men; while we still have 16,000, and if there was a head to these, we could still conquer.

The regiments of Victoria and Hidalgo have dissolved so as not to fight.

An armistice is in discussion, on the basis that the capital shall not be attacked, and that the Yankees will take nothing without paying for it—and they will encamp in the neighborhood. This armistice will serve to collect the dead and arrange a peace. The reflections which these events give rise to are so natural that I omit them. We shall soon see each other, for if peace is made I am going where you are, and no less if the army take Mexico, as I am resolved never to live in a place commanded by them. I will never witness the degradation of the occupation of our capital by the enemy. My blood boils at witnessing so much cowardice, so much inaptitude and infamy, and one must either die, or fly from this country, which is stamped with the seal of Divine reprobation, and God seems to have written against us the words of the feast of Belshazzar. Tears spring from the eyes, and despair seizes the soul, when it is seen that there is only among us a capacity for vice, and that everything is desecrated by a demoralized people. I recommend to you my family. Give my love, &c., &c.

I. U.

(This letter was written by a member of Congress.)

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

To J. M. & J.—MY DEAR FRIEND: I have none of your esteemed letters to answer, but I take the pen to recite some lamentable events—not lamentable on account of the blood shed, which has been but little considering the number of combatants engaged, but because we have not the shadow of honor left.

The battle commenced about noon on the 19th against Valencia's division, which lasted until 2, p. m., the next day, there being nothing but a continual series of routs and a series of errors committed by our generals and subordinate officers, who were filled with fear, terror, and cowardice, causing a confusion among the soldiery impossible to reduce to order. Even women would have done better.

The consequence of all this is, that all our *materiel* of war fell into the hands of the enemy, together with the fortifications from Mexicalcingo to San Angel, including San Antonio, Churubusco, Paizzacola, and, in fact, all the fortifications in the valley. The dead, wounded, and dispersed, were horrible to be seen in the city, and an immense cloud of officers rapidly traversing the streets, making it appear that they were occupied about something, in order to avoid meeting the enemy.

Nothing has been left for the salvation of the capital but an armistice obtained by the British minister, as the American army is at our very gates, and we have nothing left but the *dirt* that flies through our streets to defend the capital—that is to say, there is no *morale* left among us.

You will see, my dear friend, from my solemn predictions, that I have the sad vanity of always approaching the truth. However, I will lay aside this gloomy picture—abandon it entirely, and take myself to the bosom of my family, there to mourn the errors of my too ambitious brothers, whom we are to thank for all our misfortunes. I salute you for the last time with the name of Mexican, but shall always continue to do so as a much attached friend.

F. S. J.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

DEAR * *—I will tell you something I know and something I have seen in this accursed Babylon. It is said there is a suspension of arms, with the object of hearing some propositions made by Scott, but what is most probable is that the Mexican army will abandon the city, taking all their train, that the enemy may occupy it. A member of Congress has just said to me that there is a commission actually sitting on this subject at the lodge.

The greatest consternation reigns in the city. Some accuse Valencia, (amongst others the charlatan F. Carbajal,) others, and the larger part, throw the blame on Santa Anna. The troops are at the southern gate, but I perceive much cowardice. The city is full of dispersed, drunken, roguish soldiers. Almost all the houses are shut, and in the coffee houses the same officers are boasting a great deal whom we saw run from the battle field ground. The end is, the capital is lost.

Santa Anna has ordered out the cavalry by Gaudalupe, the object of which you know as well as I. The battalion of Toluca came last night from the Peñon to occupy one of the gates of the city, I know not which. The other force, that of General Norrigo, is at San Francisco, and the guerrilla of Mr. Rivera is in the citadel. Having been found in the rout yesterday from Churubusco, the battalions of Victoria and Hidalgo have been dissolved, while those of Independence and Bravo, who escaped with life, are prisoners.

To all appearance, this farce will be finished to-morrow.

MANUEL N. G.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR MOTHER: In great haste I write to you this letter, so that you may receive news of your husband and son. Yesterday the division of Valencia and other troops from that place were routed by the Yankees—and as it may be of interest to you (at Morelia) I advise you that the troops from that place have not yet come into action. All those from Morelia are in good health, and although the Yankees have lost a good many—the devil be with them!—nevertheless, things are in a bad state. May God help us happily out. Manuel is still in Chapultepec, and it appears that they do not intend to attack that place, as they extend from the Peñon to the San Antonio Abad. Who knows what is to come of this? Pray to God to deliver us. My dear mother, it is impossible to give an idea of the present state of Mexico. It is in the most deplorable condition. Only mournful faces are seen. May the Supreme Being defend us. Do not believe all you hear, for many lies are circulated. Mother, God of Heaven alone can assist us in our trouble. Things are in a terrible state. His Divine Majesty has sent these devils to punish us for our sins. These are the fruits of our domestic quarrels, for only by this could these devils have so scorned a nation; but it is very difficult for them to conquer us. I again reiterate my love and affection to ——— (family people.)

J. M. G.

(From a Young Lady.)

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY MUCH-LOVED UNCLE: Considering that you would be uneasy on our account under present circumstances, I write to relieve your mind. Everything is lost, and I believe there is no hope left for us. Day before yesterday Valencia had a fight with the enemy near Contreras, and it was supposed he was victorious; but the next morning he lost everything. Yesterday some national guards, at San Antonio, had a small fight, and the battalions of Hidalgo and Victoria ran like cowards, as also did the cavalry and the 11th and 3d, light infantry.

[The battalions of Hidalgo and Victoria, also those of Independence and Bravo, were called Polkas, and were composed of the more independent citizens of Mexico. The two first were ordered to retire from San Antonio and did not engage in the fight. The two last were at Churubusco and were taken prisoners, those that were not killed. This is the Mexican account in many letters.]

This is a strange fatality, and it seems that our troops are good for nothing but to boast. I only heard them cry "*there come the Yankees,*" overcome with terror and running a whole league without stopping to take breath; from which fact I have no hope that

resistance can be made at the garitas, as is intended. You will see what will happen if a defence is attempted; they will all run and there their history will end.

Ruperto saved himself, as he had the luck to run away in company with the Victorias, and he is now safe with his dear aunt and quite tranquil.

It appears impossible that 12,000 men, under the command of Scott, should have put to flight and entirely cowed 32,000 of our men.

[The American army was less than 10,000, and there were not over 7,000 in the fight.]

It confounds reason. It is opposite to reason and almost incredible, but nevertheless true. This misfortune has no remedy, and the affair must soon end, as we can do nothing.

Do not believe the thousand lies our troops may tell and of which they boast. You know that even here a thousand lies are told, coming only from the distance of our next neighbor, therefore how much more exaggerated they will be when travelling to you. Do not be afflicted, but hold all you hear in quarantine. Recommend yourself to God and trust in him, and he will take care of us.

MARIA.

P. S. Dear Uncle, I refer you to my sister's letter for the news. I can add nothing to it but that we, the Mexicans, are—

JUAN.

The blank is not filled in the original.

MEXICO, August 20, 1847,

* * I know not how to begin to write these few lines, giving you the destiny of this unfortunate city, the theatre of one of the most horrible of wars. Yesterday the enemy and the division of Valencia came in contact among the hills of San Angel, and maintained, on one and the other side, a most horrible firing from 12 o'clock until night.

This morning it was seen that Valencia had abandoned his position, and it is said they are prisoners with the artillery. At 3 o'clock, p. m., we have had another well disputed action between San Antonio and another little town called "Los Arcos," [Churubusco?] it was likewise lost, the troops retiring in disorder to the gate of San Antonio Abad, where it is expected they will fight to-morrow, and the day after, probably, at the palace.

It is a shame to have it said, that ten thousand men subjugated a city of two hundred thousand inhabitants, and an army of thirty thousand men that defended it. It appears that there is neither tactics, nor genius, nor fortune among us. God save us, for certainly his justice has decreed our ruin.

M. S.

August 20.

Anita: I have entered the city of Mexico to witness the ignominy of my country. Fear and consternation pervade the whole city. I do not fear the enemy, who have suffered much, but I have no confidence in our *dispersed* soldiers, who are all of them robbers, most of them drunk, and may break open the houses. To-morrow this farce must be concluded. To-morrow I go to Tlahupantle, to lament, in the bosom of my family, the misfortune of being a Mexican, and having children born in this nation of corruption and evil.

M. G.

[The letter is well written, giving the usual account of the defeat of Valencia, and the successful attack at Churubusco, and concludes as follows:]

MEXICO, August 21.

J. O.—In fact, we have lost the greatest part of the flower of the army, and almost all of our artillery. However, we have still from seven to eight thousand men, who are in charge of the garitas, (city entrances,) which, if well protected, we could still gain a day of glory for our nation, routing the enemy, who have lost nearly half of their forces, and are now stationed within gun-shot of the garitas, at * * * and San Angel. All I can say, is, that the events of the day are inconceivable, considering the immense number of troops we have brought together, the instruction and discipline they have undergone, and the resources we have obtained with great labor. Our triumph appeared to be certain. *

[2d Extract.]

MEXICO, August 21.

MY DEAR JESUSITA: It never passed my imagination, nor could I have believed that I should to-day be obliged to give you news so opposite to our hopes, with regard to the resistance which the enemy would have to encounter. You will remember that on Wednesday last, the division of San Luis was under command of Valencia, (referring to the regular troops from San Luis Potosi.) He moved from Tacubaya, and encamped on the hills of the Magdalena, (near the village of Contreras,) in order to impede the march of the enemy from San Augustin, through the pedregal, (that is, broken volcanic grounds, full of pointed stones, and great chasms nearly impassable from their own character,) to take possession of Santa Fé and Tacubaya. In this manner it appeared that everything for defence was perfectly well arranged. But on Thursday afternoon, (the 19th of August,) we heard an unexpected sound like that of cannon. I instantly went to the top of the house, and dis-

tinctly saw a large volume of smoke towards the village of San Geronimo, near San Angel. From the direction of the smoke, as I looked through a glass, I supposed that Valencia was attacking the enemy with a heavy fire of artillery, not answered by the enemy, who retired at dusk, thereby leaving me to believe he had been repulsed. I therefore went to bed, indulging hopes; but the enemy was too astute to go to sleep. It is said that the enemy intended to pass by the way of Contreras, but I believed that their only object that afternoon (the 19th) was to make a reconnoissance of Valencia's camp, as proved to be the case. During the night there was a heavy fall of rain, which continued until morning. I woke up early on the 20th, and thought I heard a distant sound, like that of thunder, I ascended to the roof of the house at a quarter past six, and saw a heavy smoke immediately over the broken ground of San Geronimo. It was an active fire of artillery, which lasted but a very short time, and I left the top of the house under the firm belief that the enemy had either been routed or repulsed, as the position which Valencia occupied was very advantageous. But what was my astonishment when, at about 10 o'clock, the news spread that Valencia had been surprised by the enemy's attacking him on all sides, and completely routing him. I would not at first believe it, and I cannot describe my feelings when I found it to be the truth. I was overpowered by rage and desperation. No event has ever caused me such an impression. At about 12 o'clock, an attack was made at Churubusco, the hacienda de Tlalpman and San Antonio. The firing lasted until 2, p. m., more or less, and the result was, that our troops were driven and retired from their positions, which positions had been occupied by the largest portion of the national guards, and on whom every body had confided. The cause of the disaster is attributed to Valencia, who, it is said, did not obey the orders of Santa Anna, and attacked before the proper time. According to public opinion, Santa Anna was the only general who behaved well, for he sustained the fire of the enemy at San Antonio for two hours, and covered the retreat of the Polka's, (*gentlemen* soldiers,) who, but for him, would have been destroyed, plunging the whole city in grief and mourning. Santa Anna was obliged to retire to the city, and the enemy occupied the positions.

The battalions of Victoria and Hidalgo [the Polkas] entered the city without loss, and that of Independence was captured. Today we have no news, but I suspect that the enemy is arranging his plans to take the city, where we have more forces than he imagines.

J. S.

Mexico, August 21, 1847.

* * Heartsick, and filled with indignation, I was preparing to give you, by mail, news of the fatal rout our army had suffered, when we had the satisfaction to receive your favor, and in answer

to which I will merely give you the most essential particulars, and true, leaving, for the present, small matters that are of little moment.

On the evening of the 19th, General Valencia met with the enemy, who, not fulfilling the imprudent hopes of our chiefs, took the route, as ought to have been expected, by San Angel, to the hills of Santa Fé, to gain possession of Chapultepec. Between this and San Angel, and another called *La Magdalena*, began a well disputed action, and, if our army did not acquire a complete triumph, it could not, at any rate, be said that they fought with a bad result. The pass was fiercely disputed by each of the forces, which retained their position at night, Valencia, for the time, checking the advance of the enemy. But, as the Americans are sharp and industrious, they took advantage of the darkness of the night, made more dark by heavy rains, and placed their troops, without being suspected, so as to open a fire on the 20th on both Valencia and San Antonio. At 5, a. m., his batteries commenced an active and terrible fire on the points referred to, and General Valencia (it is said, disobeying the orders of Santa Anna) marched with his force against them, but was entirely routed. [The writer gives the rumors as they reached the city. General Valencia was attacked in his camp, and did not advance.] General Santa Anna went to assist him, with all those that were at his command, [at hand.] But the enemy had placed itself so advantageously, that the camp was surrounded by a circle of fire, so constant, that our troops lost spirit, and, accustomed by bad luck to run, they broke up in such disorder that, by 12 o'clock, the camp was in the hands of the enemy, and the few troops we had left entered the capital at 3 o'clock, p. m., with Gen. Santa Anna, followed by the enemy, within gunshot of the fortifications, at the gate of San Antonio Abad; from whence they returned, when some shots were fired from the fortifications. Trains of artillery, cannon, ammunition, all that belong to our army, fell into the hands of the enemy, for the dispersion was horrid. Our loss in dead, wounded, and dispersed, is reckoned at six thousand men. The loss of the enemy is said to be greater, but you know that this way of expression among us is the fashion. The account I have given you I received from Olacta, who was among the dispersed, and, as an eye witness, can be relied upon.

The enemy are now at the gates of the city, possessed of Churubusco. Some of our troops are at El Niño Perdido La Piedad, and the rest are in barracks; and, since 3 o'clock yesterday, there has been a profound silence. I cannot tell why the enemy has not entered the capital; nor why, if it is still to be defended, that our troops have retired to their barracks, from which they have not moved all day. The firing has entirely ceased. The enemy are at the gates, and our troops are in their barracks—the one advances no further, the other makes no movement for defence. It is not known that a cessation of hostilities has been agreed upon. In this state of things, we are all stupified. You hear nothing in the streets but the question, what has happened? All throw the fault on

Santa Anna. It is said he throws the fault on Valencia, accusing him of disobedience of orders.

* * The only news we have at present is, that it appears that we intend to defend the capital, and that we expect every moment that the enemy will begin to bombard it. If this should happen, you can figure to yourself how much would be suffered by this beautiful city and its inhabitants; and, in the end, we shall have to suffer the humiliation of witnessing the entrance of our conquerors, for I do not perceive the smallest hopes of a triumph. We have no artillery, we have no troops, we have nothing. Our army ran at the first. We suffered yesterday a complete defeat, and still talk about making resistance! I do not disapprove of it, for it is necessary to defend the capital at its last entrenchments, because the national decorum requires it; but I repeat that it is useless.

This is the situation at present of the Mexicans, I had better say of those that unhappily are Mexicans. It is not difficult to see the future; a nation of eight millions of souls domineered over by twenty thousand vandals. If, at any time, we have deserved compassion among nations, we now merit opprobrium. I am a Mexican, and, if God does not deprive me of life, I shall have to outlive this humiliation, and witness to-morrow, *perhaps* to-morrow itself, the destruction of one-half of the capital, and the occupation by our conquerors; and, not to be permitted to fight for its defence, for fear of another ignominy. This is a most desperate situation! It is three years, the 11th of the present month, since I entered public life, and I have suffered all that you are aware of, but I did not know what it was to suffer till now. Who can doubt that this is a chastisement from Heaven! It is rare that the Host is exhibited, but in the fight of the 19th, and until 9 o'clock at night, the Divine Host was shown in the church of Mexico. The temples were full of Mexicans, praying to God for a triumph of our arms. The day following, from 7, a. m., to 9, p. m., it was entirely a different spectacle; the streets were full of soldiers, bathed in blood, who were continually rending the air with their cries and lamentations, mingled with words of insolence for their bad fortune, as they crawled to their doors or the hospitals. Carts might be seen, with litters, carrying the severely wounded who could not travel on foot, and from their beds of anguish was heard the most heart-rending complaints, which were mingled with the shrieks of women who, like demented people, straggled about the streets without any particular object, lamenting the fate of their friends, of whose fate they were ignorant. The church steeples, and most elevated points, were crowded by numbers of people, who still remained in their positions, after witnessing the issue of the combat, their countenances the pictures of consternation. During the combat, some were immoveably transfixed, others were violently startled by cannon; soldiers were seen running without muskets, and Polkas (national guards) wrapped in their blankets, their heads covered with slouched hats. What gave the last sad coloring to this picture, was the retiring of soldiers to their barracks in the evening, about one-eighth of their original number, some with-

out cartridge boxes, some without arms, and all bedaubed with mud from head to foot. The night before, prayers were offered up in behalf of each soldier in particular, and for the nation in general; but the following day we witnessed the catastrophe. How painful to say this! what human power can oppose such a plague?

When I saw the Divinity exposed the previous night, I conceived hopes, because I saw we looked to help more powerful than any recourse of the enemy. I have seen the result, and this forces me to believe that it is nothing less than the chastisement of Heaven, and this is my reason for saying, as I have said, that all resistance is useless, although I judge it necessary for the decorum of the nation.

The description which I have attempted to give, though sorrowful in the extreme for a Mexican, is nevertheless exact; and I have given it against my will, for I would have wished to save you pain, but you requested the exact truth, and I will continue to advise you of what may happen. To-day all is tranquil; I hope in God that this calm may not be followed by a storm.

JUAN G.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

* * * * * I likewise send you a diary of the events from the 19th to this date, by which you will see the pitiable situation in which we are placed, if not by bad faith, at least by the most visible incapacity. Santa Anna is now the object of public execration. The general opinion is, that his enemy, Valencia, is the cause of the death of so many who died by the side of that general, upon whom Santa Anna throws the blame of all, and has even said that wherever he finds him he will have him shot.

Those that were in the camp complain that nothing was done but by order of Santa; that he would not allow the least deliberation, from which it resulted that Bravo would not offer even advice, and gave no orders in the matter, so the disorder became frightful.

Unhappy country! unhappy ourselves! if, in the end, we have to receive in this capital our vanquishers. One idea gives me consolation. According to what I have been told, there are only six thousand Yankees left, and, although we yet have more than twelve thousand, I will be content to lose another battle, if we have one, as we shall lose, for our soldiers will run; but two thousand more Yankees will be killed, only four thousand will remain, and with these order cannot be kept in Mexico. We are in the last struggles of the drowned. What a shame!

MIGUEL M.

Diary of the war.

August 19, at 9, a. m., a dense cloud of smoke was seen in the hacienda of San Antonio, caused by the fire of our artillery, di-