

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

R. L.—MY DEAR UNCLE: My heart is oppressed with grief, and I can give you but a very slight sketch of the unfortunate results of the battles of the 19th and 20th, and of the misfortunes of our Mexican nation.

General Valencia was pushed near the factory of Magdalena, where he was attacked by 10,000 Americans on the 19th, who endeavored to force their passage that way against 4,000 Mexicans, and had not General Perez came to the assistance of Valencia, taking position on his left flank, the same results would have occurred that day which happened the morning following. The enemy, yesterday morning, by a decided and bold attempt, took possession of Valencia's camp near Magdalena, completely routing him and taking possession of the greatest part of his artillery. But you must bear in mind that had the troops which came to his assistance the day previous been there, the result would have been different. Magdalena, once in possession of the Americans, they immediately proceeded and attacked our main body of unconquerable Mexicans, who were in their fortifications, and only listened to the musketry of the enemy, as they had no artillery with them. We only waited for two discharges of their musketry, and our troops were put to flight in terrible confusion, and it is remarkable what a state of fear extended throughout our entire army. This circumstance enabled the Americans to take possession of our fortifications with the greatest ease, and more so as the National Guards [Polka's] whose name is so renowned, behaved with an ignominy lamentable to relate.

(Of the reported armistice, the writer says :)

It is supposed that it will be favorable to peace, but you must be well aware that, should it be effected, of which I have no doubt, it will be a disgrace to the Mexican people.

E. C.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR YOUNG LADY: Yesterday I arrived at home without accident, having escaped the dangers of the fight by privilege, or because the Yankees took pity on us, for, on leaving our camp, such was the disorder and confusion, that if the enemy had attacked us with whips, not a single one of us would have been left. The generals gave orders and the camp-women screamed, the mules would not pull, the soldiers did not wish to retreat without fighting, and General Bravo, our commander, would not allow it, and at last we escaped, saving some part of our munitions, but losing much, which could not be removed. The Yankees undertook to outflank us, but meeting with the division, they commenced a fire. We stood on the defence, and they certainly through pity took the other road, all the time accompanying us on the left. Hardly had we

reached the bridge at Churubusco, when the artillery fire was commenced at that place. General Santa Anna arrived there at the moment we passed, and he ordered such of the artillery as was convenient should be turned upon the enemy, and that we should continue [to retreat!] On the way we met the division of General Perez, which afterwards engaged the enemy, and while the action continued we reached the city. We found Mexico in the greatest consternation, perhaps more for our sakes than for the events of the morning; for I saw that our presence produced the greatest joy, and we were even cheered when it was seen that we had not met with any loss.

It seems impossible that, in the space of six hours, eight thousand men should have been destroyed, of which not the eighth part were killed. But our troops scarcely saw a movement of the enemy before they fled, and that without the possibility of stopping them. The battalions of Bravo and Independence were attacked in the convent of Churubusco and taken prisoners, and it is thought that Gorostiza is of the number.

To-day about five thousand of the dispersed have been collected, and we have now about twelve thousand men in arms. An armistice, &c., &c., &c.

SENORITA DÑA, M. DE J. M.

August 21, 1847.

OLD MAN: Although I am a regidor, (a civil officer,) still I resolved to go to the fight, as I could no longer remain in the city taking care of disorderly women and drunkards, I determined to see the fate of my unfortunate country; consequently, on Tuesday last, I received an order from the minister of war and government directing me to join General Alcorta, as his aid-de-camp; and on Wednesday morning I went to the Penon, resolved to endure all the privations of a campaign, and to see in what I could serve my country. The enemy presented himself on Thursday morning before us, in order to allow their engineers to make a reconnoissance of our position, but he did not like the *patato*, and on Sunday night Santa Anna heard that the enemy had certainly taken the route towards Tlalpam, (San Augustin.) On Monday morning, at 9 o'clock, we commenced our march towards the same place, (by the city,) and on Tuesday, after an examination of the place, we saw we could not make resistance there, and it was resolved that we should take up our position at San Antonio. That same afternoon the Yankees arrived at San Augustin at 2, p. m. We proceeded with the greatest activity to make preparations for resistance, and ordered the heaviest pieces of ordnance to be brought from Penon to San Antonio, and we protected our right flank as much as possible, fearing that the enemy might take advantage of us in that quarter. We made ditches and redoubts, and General Perez's brigade, composed of 4,000 infantry and 700 horse, of the hussars, who were at Jalapa, was ordered to go around towards Coyoacan, (near San Angel.) The 5th brigade, composed of

Victoria, Independence, Hidalgo and Bravos, were ordered to march to Churubusco; this brigade was composed of 2,000 men, and generally called Polkas. On Wednesday the Yankees presented themselves at the hacienda of Coapa, about the fourth of a league from San Antonio. There must have been seven or eight hundred men, and we fired several shots at them with our 24-pound piece, and some shells, with a good result. In the mean time I took a nap at general headquarters, about half a league this side of San Antonio, where Bravo commanded. Day before yesterday, (Thursday,) we continued firing cannon on the enemy, and at about 1 o'clock we observed that Valencia, who was posted at Magdalena to impede the enemy that way, commenced firing cannon. The fire was heavy, when an aid of Valencia's arrived, saying that he was being surrounded, and we sent an aid to Perez, and another to Mexico to Lombardini, (minister of war,) in order that he might tell Rangel to march with his 2,000 men, together with Perez's brigade, to the support of Valencia. At about half past 3 o'clock in the afternoon we found ourselves in front of the enemy, who were taking a position on the left flank of Valencia, who, the enemy, on seeing 5,000 men, who came to reinforce Valencia, commenced covering themselves in the bushes and behind the church of San Geronimo. However, the enemy's forces in front of Valencia continued to fire upon him, and he, Valencia, returned their fire with 21 pieces of cannon. A little before dusk we received three light pieces we had sent for, and we fired six times with good result. I had proposed not to ask where we were going, and what was my astonishment when, at night, we were ordered to retire to San Angel, two and a half leagues distant from Valencia's camp. We there met Rangel's division, and ours, together with his, amounted to 12,000 men.

Well, old gentleman, instead of marching early the next morning to the beautiful position we left on the 19th, we did not start till after 6 o'clock, merely, as it were, to see the destruction of Valencia, and we had not arrived at the position of the previous day when we met two flying soldiers, at about 7 o'clock, who brought the fatal news of the complete rout of Valencia. Then Don Antonio (Santa Anna) gave orders for our return to Mexico, as it was to be made another Troy. Rangel's brigade was ordered to take possession of the citadel, and Santa Anna gave Perez and Bravo orders to retire from San Antonio; as San Angel being taken we were cut off by the enemy, and you can imagine the confusion and the destruction of the morale of our army which ensued. In moving our artillery and ammunition we were put to much inconvenience and delay, for, as it had rained the night previous, the wheels stuck in the mud, and the mules, fatigued, could not haul them. The result was, that when the Yankees observed our movement, and saw us withdraw our pieces from the embrazures at San Antonio, he detached two columns, one by the pedrigal, (rough volcanic ground,) and the other down the main road, and consequently took San Antonio, and most of Alvarez's troops, brought from the south, were made prisoners. Whilst this was going on

at San Antonio, the same troops which had routed Valencia were detached in two columns, one of which attacked Churubusco, where, after a small resistance, the companies of Independence and Bravo were taken prisoners, as also other companies that were cut off in their retreat. The other column came down the main road and attacked the bridge by the same name,

[NOTE.—The American force was sent forward in three columns, and attacked the enemy's works in the front and on both flanks. The second work is called the *tete de pont*.]

where our own wagons (returning from San Antonio and fast in the mud) served them as trenches; and after an attack of infantry alone they took our position, which appeared impregnable,

[The writer is in the main accurate, but the Yankees had two light batteries in this or these attacks.]

putting us shamefully to flight; and had the enemy been any other, they would have gone directly into Mexico, for our cursed soldiers, frightened to death, were bellowing through the streets, "here comes the Yankees." Finally, Santa Anna resolved to defend the city at the first line, and if our soldiers would not run, we had a sufficient number left to defend this unfortunate city.

But now they speak of a capitulation, or I know not what. The result is that the Yankees can march directly into Mexico at any hour they please, owing to the cowardice and ——— of our generals-in-chief. Bassadra, Mora Villamil, and Aranjais started at day-break this morning, with orders from Pacheco, to ask Scott for 30 hours' armistice, in order to bury the dead and collect the wounded. Santa Anna became very angry and said, this cursed Pacheco had made a fool of himself and compromised me—which remark having come to the ears of Pacheco, he resigned. Some say it was a pre-concerted affair. I will now give you, my old man, my opinion of all this: Valencia wished to be the hero, but had not the elements to make himself so; Santa Anna wished to destroy him, and, by not sending him re-inforcements day before yesterday, he has lost the nation. Keep this to yourself. Valencia received positive orders not to engage in fight; but, notwithstanding those orders, and the order to spike his artillery and retire if necessary, he remained, and replied that he considered himself strong enough to beat the enemy; and that his army from the north (it was from San Luis Potosi) could not be overcome, much less would it retreat before the enemy. From all I have said, you will judge the future destiny of our unhappy country!

JUAN.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR F.: * * * As I wrote to you, you will see that on Wednesday I went to the palace, and on that same day we arrived at Churubusco, and on Thursday we went to the hacienda St. Antonio. Yesterday we were ordered out at 4 o'clock in the

morning, and remained formed in the hacienda, which was full of mud from the continued rain during the night, till about 11 o'clock, when we marched, expecting to attack the enemy, for we were told we were surrounded; but, by a miracle of God, Jorjin saved the whole battalion, for, had we left five minutes later, our retreat would have been cut off, as happened to other corps following in our rear. Our battalion, [that of Victoria?] and that of Hidalgo, were the only ones to which no accident happened, although some shots were fired at us.

All is lost. The enemy is in Churubusco and San Antonio. At a little after 3, we reached Mexico, very much fatigued, as we came in haste. They sent us to the garita of the *Niño Perdido*, where we occupied the breastwork until 5 o'clock, about which time there was united a respectable number of dispersed soldiers, who came pouring in on every side. At dusk we were marched to our barracks, and thence dismissed to our homes, and from that time till now, half past 5, p. m., we know nothing of what has happened, [i. e., of the negotiations.]

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR * * * : It is now 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and an armistice has been concluded between the government and the enemy for forty-eight hours, and I will avail myself of the diligence in that time to join you. Twenty-five others have applied for seats, but the diligence is full. I was very anxious to get a seat as * * *

It is not true that Bravo is either dead or a prisoner, as I have, to-day, seen him in the city, * * *

Our dead have been but few, but we have been most shamefully routed. I suppose you have heard many alarming stories, but calm yourself, as there is no further danger, but we have been lost by means of a handfull of adventurers of the worst kind. * * *

The batalion of Victoria has not fought. They say they will fight, but will only obey the orders of their colonel, as their generals ran away.

MEXICO, August 20, 1847.

All is lost, all. My presentiments never have deceived me—and when I have been deceived it is when I have *reasoned* with those who *reason*, and last night it was *reasonable* to confide, and I endeavored to *confide*, to believe and to persuade myself, although the instinct of presentiment would arise and say ——— just what has occurred. You will already have heard of it when you receive this, but perhaps you would wish me to repeat it, although at this moment a sort of delirium has taken possession of my faculties; and, in truth, I do not know what to say to you; but what I can I

will say, be it what it may. Yesterday morning Santa Anna ordered Valencia not to fight; Valencia answered that he would fight, as his own and the honor of the nation required it—and he did fight with exemplary courage until 7 o'clock in the evening, at which time the firing ceased, when Santa Anna, because it rained, determined to take his troops to San Angel, leaving Valencia at his advanced post. At daylight this morning Valencia was outflanked by the enemy, in the direction of the *inaccessible* place of the pedregal. [This is underscored in the original—it refers to broken volcanic grounds.] He was entirely surrounded on all sides, they fought like lions. Santa Anna coolly observed this, and did not send to our general any assistance, fearing the laurels which, against his orders, Valencia was gathering; but Valencia was overpowered and succumbed, yet like a brave man. At about 7 o'clock this morning, afterwards, we were defeated at San Antonio and Churubusco. From these points the regiments of Hidalgo and Victoria were ordered to retire. That of Independence, which was isolated, was cut off by the enemy—some of its brave men were killed, as happened to that valuable young man M. De Castro, and others were made prisoners. In the midst of the universal desperation which reigns in the capital, because our numerous army has been beaten in detail by a handful of foreigners, (although brave,) as there have been corps of ours which did not fight, owing to the want of disposition by the general-in-chief, who has made us suffer the torments of hell, we have seen Santa Anna at dusk enter the palace, and a multitude of cavalry and infantry, without suspecting until the present moment what it signified; some believing that it was owing to the rain, and in order to spend a pleasant night like that of yesterday; others thinking that a capitulation had been agreed upon; but the greater part not knowing what opinion to form. I shall put this letter into the mail, &c., and will write again.

* * * * *
Everything is complete confusion, and some time must pass before I can judge of events.

I do not know what I have written. I am crushed by the horrible realization of my presentiments, which have never deceived me, and owing to which I have never been able to have any enthusiasm or faith in this war—and for which reason I have not been able to persuade myself to take a part in the war, though I have ardently desired it.

I had forgotten to say that Santa Anna has given orders for Valencia to be shot, when he has the sympathies of all in his favor, and Santa Anna bears all the odium, which was not equalled by that of the 6th of December. This is sufficient.

Remember me to, &c., &c.

Your friend, (anonymous.)

[NOTE.—The same writer writes the next day, the 21st, and corrects the report in regard to De Castro, and adds:]

The battalions of Hidalgo and Victoria would have fought had

they not been ordered to retire by Santa Anna; and, in spite of the order, many of them did fight in the defences, (works.) * * *

By this mail you are called to Congress, ordered to convene by Santa Anna, who has listened to the commissioners from the United States, on the subject of peace, in virtue of the constitutional powers which he has. When Santa Anna returned to the capital this afternoon, at 4 o'clock, he said that it was in virtue of an armistice of thirty hours, to gather his wounded; but the truth is, he has already made a peace with Scott, for so the interpreter said to a friend of mine, and your friend N. infers from the despatch of Santa Anna to Congress. I nevertheless send you the letter I wrote yesterday.

Scott has very much praised the valor of the Mexicans; and he told A. that he had the best intentions towards us. Come, then, and assist in celebrating the funeral of our country. A revolution may yet take place in favor of Valencia, caused by the peace. The public mind is exceedingly excited, and for this reason it, perhaps, would not be prudent for you to bring your family.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

* * * As soon as the Americans had united the other side of the Peñon, they took the road by Chalco to San Augustin Tlalpam; but the most difficult to pass was the stony ground, there being no wagon road through it, and it was declared to be impassable. But each man of eight or ten thousand Americans, who had to pass that way, took a bag of dirt on his shoulders, so that on the way, with eight or ten thousand bags of dirt, they went on making the road, so that they all passed without detention to Tlalpam, to take Tacubaya by the way of the hills of San Angel. The Mexican forces that were in the Peñon came and fortified themselves in San Antonio and Churubusco, below San Angel, while about seven or eight thousand veterans of cavalry and infantry, with thirty pieces of cannon, under Valencia, took post beyond San Angel. General Santa Anna was in the point below with the national guard, so that, by this plan, we had the Americans in San Augustin, the Mexicans forming their lines between them and the city. But now for the fight.

On Thursday, the 19th, the Americans marched with the intention to pass above San Angel. General Valencia marched to encounter them, and sustained the action from 4, p. m., till night closed in. The firing was severe; it could be clearly seen from the roof of the house. At night the Americans marched up a ravine, or hollow, that divided the two camps, surrounded the Mexicans, and finished with them from 4 till 7, a. m., on the 20th. There were some Americans in a little hacienda beyond San Antonio, who had been shot at the evening before by Mexicans, but they remained very quiet, not answering the shots; but when Valencia was defeated they attacked the points below, where Santa Anna commanded in person, and in a few hours all was lost.

The troops yesterday dispersed, with the exception of the batta-

lions of Independence and Bravo's, which were cut off by the Americans. It is said that many were killed, some escaped, and the rest are prisoners. This is what has happened up to yesterday. To-day, what troops remain have gone to the gates of San Antonio Abad and Niño Perdido, and, according to the general opinion, we shall all, in a few days, be Yankees.

IGN. N.

[Another Letter.—Extract.]

August 20.

To-day, at 7, a. m., the Americans took all of our artillery, and our army was so routed that they were entirely dispersed. The fate of General Valencia is unknown. Santa Anna has been compelled to retire upon Mexico, having lost all, including his honor. The Yankees have made many prisoners and taken many cannon.

B———Z.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY NEVER-FORGOTTEN SIR AND COMMANDER: On the 19th and 20th the division of Valencia fought and was defeated, as was also some other troops from this place. These events have placed things in a terrible state. I cannot say with certainty to what are we to attribute these misfortunes, as there is a great diversity of opinion on the subject. One thing is certain, that from these reverses our affairs are in a most lamentable state, and it will be very difficult to reestablish them and bring them to the condition in which they were on the 19th. The enemy has lost a great number of men, but ours have lost courage. There are many chiefs, officers and men in the power of the enemy, and many wounded. Until the present time, now 1, p. m., the firing has not been re-commenced. The enemy is in many positions of the second line, and our army has retreated to the first line. It is very difficult to form a judgment of the result of these misfortunes, the more so as so many of our officers are so badly spoken of. The enemy has demanded the surrender of the capital. It is said that General Mora and others have gone as conferees. One thing is certain, that our troops have retired to their quarters, and that the lines have been deserted. From this state of things the capital is in a terrible state. It is said that General Paredes is here, and that he and General Valencia are searched for by General Santa Anna, who has ordered Valencia to be shot. In fact, you cannot imagine in what a lamentable condition we are. I have no time to be more particular, and I beg you will have the goodness to present my compliments to Donna G. and Donna C., and the rest of the family, as also to my friends S., E. and C.; and you, my beloved commander, can dispose of the affections of your

subject and faithful servant, who, wishing you all happiness, kisses your hand

J. M. G.

Com'g. General DON JOSE DE UGARTE.

[This letter is from a minister of the government to a millionaire.]

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—In my last I gave you an idea of the state and position of our army. Yesterday, at daylight, our right [referring to Valencia] was completely surrounded and routed, and afterwards the positions on the left [Churubusco, Portalis, &c.] were attacked, to which succeeded a disorderly retreat of our troops, which led the victorious enemy to within one league of the city, where he paused, not to be wanting in a prudence becoming a wise general, although he might have entered to the very palace itself. You may imagine the consternation and disorder prevailing in the capital at this time. To-day Don Ig. Moro left the city with the object of proposing a cessation of hostilities, under the pretext of collecting the wounded and an exchange of prisoners, although we have but very few of the latter. When he arrived at the camp of the enemy, he was handed a letter which the American general had already prepared, proposing an armistice with a view to enter upon negotiations for peace, which naturally was accepted, and to-morrow it will be arranged by Moro and Quijano, who are the commissioners. But the enemy declared his purpose of occupying the towns in the immediate vicinity of the capital, in order to obtain quarters and subsistence for his troops. This is the position of affairs to-day. What is to follow you can imagine, for we have no alternative but to enter into arrangements or leave the capital at the mercy of the conquerors.

Present my compliments to the Señoras C's, and trusting that you and your family enjoy the best health, please to receive the affections of your attentive servant and friend, who kisses your hand.

I. R.

Sen. DON G. M. and T.

MEXICO, August 21, 1847.

MY DEAR TEACHER: At last, yesterday, we were entirely routed after three battles, Contreras, San Antonio, and Churubusco, and our troops were dispersed after a horrible slaughter, and the enemy arrived in triumph as far as the hacienda of the Portalis, where they passed the night. The spectacle in this city yesterday was horrible; all was tears, confusion, and bitterness, and it was pitiable to see the wounded and dispersed coming in in the afternoon. It is said that Bravo, Perdigan, Zerecero, Perez, Gagoso, and others, have been killed. At the present moment, 10 o'clock, there are

some troops going out, and, according to appearances, General Santa Anna is resolved to attack the enemy with the miserable remains of the army, and although there are rumors of treaties, I think there is no foundation for them. I do not give you any, particulars, &c.

J. N. M.

Sr. DON J. M. C.

(A letter in the form of notes of events.)

MEXICO, August 20, 1847.

One o'clock, p. m., Judas! all is lost, eternal shame for us. As I said to you, when I closed my letter this morning, the firing between six and seven was horrible. At the last mentioned hour it entirely ceased, which caused me to believe that all was decided. I was listening until eight, and observing that there was no ringing of bells, I began to fear that the result was unfavorable to us. I went into the street and immediately perceived signs of sorrow and down heartedness in the countenances of all. I walked towards the palace and observed the same; besides, several officers, who arrived, said they knew nothing, but their manner showed very plainly our misfortune.

The scene of Cerro Gordo has been repeated exactly, and that, too, when the tactics of the enemy of commencing an action in the evening to strike a finishing blow the next morning was well known. This time Valencia remained in his positions, and Santa Anna abandoned him, retiring to San Angel, and Valencia found himself attacked by double his numbers.

Four o'clock, p. m. A little after 12, firing was heard in San Antonio, and lasted about an hour and a half, and, after a short pause, it was heard much nearer, which, by all signs, appears to be in Churubusco. About two o'clock I directed my steps towards San Antonio Abad, (the garita,) where there was seen a numerous crowd. The sight which presented itself at this place, and in all the streets of the Raspro, was horrible; all was full of dispersed soldiers, carts, shrieking women, and devils. The battalions of Hidalgo and Victoria, with four pieces, were in the plazuela of San Lucas when I arrived. Some of those with whom I spoke said that Santa Anna had betrayed them; that at San Antonio, when it was least expected, they were ordered to retreat, and that, except four pieces brought away, they had spiked their guns; that Santa Anna had remained at Churubusco with the division of Perez and the battalions of Independence and Bravo.

When I returned, about three, p. m., and was talking with some acquaintances at the corner of Jesus and San Manuel streets, we heard some shots which we were sure were fired at the gate of Candelaria; as a matter of course, all the world immediately ran, and I came home. The tumult was of short duration, and at this hour