

each at least three to four times. They acknowledge to have had thirty thousand men in the field on that day, and yet we drove them on every occasion, and in the end made more than twenty-three hundred prisoners, among them seven of their principal generals, and about forty pieces of cannon.

Our loss, I am sorry to say, as may be expected, has been very great; it may possibly reach one thousand killed and wounded; but the returns are not yet in, but enough is known to satisfy us that we have lost many very valuable officers. Among the prisoners taken, I was mortified to see between fifty and seventy deserters from our army, with the Mexican uniform on.

A court is in session to try them, and I trust that many of them will be punished. It is pretty well known from their position, in the battle of San Pablo, that a volley from them killed and wounded sixteen out of seventeen of the 2d infantry, including an officer, and leaving one officer (the adjutant of the regiment) standing.

There are many of our friends, I am sorry to say, among the killed and wounded; but I can hardly enumerate them now. Young Captain Hanson, of Washington, was killed; Colonel Butler, of the South Carolina regiment, was killed; Smith, badly wounded in the arm and thigh; hopes are entertained that his arm may be saved; Lieutenant Irons shot through the windpipe; slight hopes of his recovery; Captain Phil. Kearny lost his arm in the charge towards the gate of the city; he is doing well. There are others, no doubt, which I cannot recollect at this moment, but many that we are equally interested in are safe. Asgner and Galt are both safe.

The next morning, the general, leaving a hospital and a garrison in San Augustin, set off with a determination of reaching that place before night. Halting at Coyoacan a short time, to allow time for his various orders for the movement of the troops to be executed, he was met by a flag from the city, asking terms. After making his reply, the bearer of the flag, a general of engineers, very civilly proposed to the general, knowing his intention of coming here, that if he would halt a few hours longer, he would request his government to send word to the castle of Chapultepec not to fire on us as we approached; but the general replied that it was his intention to come here, and he would take the risk; and on he went. On approaching the town, the general sent me forward with an order to Colonel Harney, of the dragoons, to take possession of it, and make the necessary disposition of pickets, &c., and wait the arrival of General Worth, before unsaddling his horses.

We rode into town without molestation, but a troop, which had accompanied Captain Lee, in advance, had preceded us. It was lucky for us that Chapultepec did not fire upon us, for the town is in perfect range of the guns, and might have knocked us into a cocked hat. Worth's division did not arrive until near dark, and we had none but dragoons with us. The same evening another flag was received from the city. I will not pretend to give the objects. Several have been interchanged since, and I am happy

to say that an armistice was this day agreed upon, with the object of negotiating for a peace. The terms were dictated by the general, and every thing looks as favorable as may be.

The general, very magnanimously, and very discreetly, no doubt, too, did not ask a surrender of the city, as it is virtually under his control, and to have taken the army into it would have been productive of some trouble, as it would be next to impossible to control the troops. We are occupying the bishop's palace, a huge pile of buildings, with magnificent gardens attached, but as uncomfortable as can be, there being no furniture. The view from here, though, is beyond description. Chapultepec, a little on our left, looks frowning down upon us with its heavy guns, and the city, with its innumerable spires, nearly surrounded by water, is directly in front. But I have not space for further description.

K.

Captain R. E. Lee's Letter.

TACUBAYA, August 22, 1847.

***** We are now located in one wing of the archbishop's palace. Chapultepec, with its magnificent grove, is before us; and we overlook the great city, surrounded by its lakes, and embosomed in its mountains. I never realized the beauty of the valley of Mexico until I reached this spot. To see it now, lighted by the soft, bright moon, with every village, spire, hut and mountain reflected in its silver lakes, you would think it even surpassed the descriptions we read of it. There are also some stupendous works of art around us. But I can tell you nothing, for I have not yet been in the city, though I have knocked at its gates. In the absence, then, of something more interesting, I shall have to tell you of the operations of the army.

On the 7th instant General Twiggs's division left Puebla. It was followed, on the 8th, by General Quitman's; on the 9th by General Worth's, and on the 10th by General Pillow's. General Scott left on the 8th, and overtook General Twiggs that night at San Martin. Our march over the mountains was undisturbed, except by rumors of guerillas and resistance. Both disappeared as we approached, and we left their abandoned works as we found them. On the 11th General Twiggs encamped at Ayotla, fifteen miles from Mexico, on the direct road. The other divisions, on each succeeding day, came up in order, and took positions in the rear; General Worth occupying Chalco. The reconnoissances of the 12th and 13th satisfied us of the strength of the enemy's defences in our front. Their principal defence was at El Peñon, commanding the causeway between the lakes of Tezcuco and Chalco. The hill of El Peñon is about three hundred feet high, having three plateaus, of different elevations. It stands in the waters of Lake Tezcuco. Its base is surrounded by a dry trench, and its sides arranged with breastworks,

from its base to its crest. It was armed with thirty pieces of cannon, and defended by 7,000 men, under Santa Anna in person. The causeway passed directly by its base; the waters of the lake washing each side of the causeway for two miles in front, and the whole distance, seven miles, to the city. There was a battery on the causeway, about four hundred yards in advance of the Peñon; another by its side; a third about a mile in front of the entrance to the city, and a fourth at the entrance. About two miles in front of the Peñon a road branched off to the left, and crossed the outlet of Lake Hochimillico, at the village of Mexicalcingo, six miles from the main road. This village, surrounded by a marsh, was enveloped in batteries, and only approached over a paved causeway, a mile in length; beyond, the causeway continued through the marsh for two miles farther, and opened upon terra firma at the village of Churubusco, which was also fortified, and which we shall see more of presently. The reconnoissance of the 14th satisfied us that the route south of Lake Chalco was practicable for our wagons, or could be made so. That day General Pillow's division closed upon the village of Chalco, and the next morning (15th) General Worth led off, south of the lake. The divisions took up the line of march in succession, General Twiggs bringing up the rear, and we turned our backs upon the fortifications of the Peñon and Mexicalcingo. General Valencia, with 6,000 men, made an attempt to annoy our rear as it turned Lake Chalco; but General Twiggs, having his train in front, and his division well in hand, wheeled into line to the left, and, with one discharge of Taylor's battery, tumbled over some men and horses, and sent the rest flying over the hills like the wild ducks from the lakes. He then broke again into column, and resumed his march. The rancheros and guerilleros, hovering about our front, gave us little trouble; and the working parties filled up the trenches, and rolled away the rocks that had been placed there to retard us, without stopping our march. On the 17th General Worth encamped at San Augustin, on the Acapulco road, and moved down on the 18th two and a half miles, in front of San Antonio, to make room for the other division to close upon him. The 18th was devoted to reconnoissances. San Antonio was situated similarly to Mexicalcingo; batteries, commanding the causeway in front, swept over the marshes to the left as far as the lake. The *pedrigal*, or volcanic rocks, rendered the right impassable for everything but infantry, and difficult for them. One and a half mile in the rear were situated the defences of Churubusco, commanding the approach over the *pedrigal*, and by the way of Mexicalcingo. A route was discovered west from San Augustin, over the spurs of the mountain, to the San Angel road, by which these positions could be turned. General Twiggs's division, coming up on the morning of the 19th, was thrown forward on this route, to cover the working parties formed from Pillow's division. By 1, p. m., we had surmounted the hills, and approached the two divisions of the army, with their field batteries, &c., within cannon range of Valencia's entrenchments, situated on the San Angel road, and commanding the only approach through the *pedrigal*, or volcanic

rocks. The working parties were returned to their regiments, the tools re-packed, and preparations made to dislodge the enemy, before continuing the road further. On approaching his front, within canister range, and driving in his advanced parties, posted behind breastworks across the road, with Magruder's and the howitzer batteries, it was found that the ground on his left offered the greatest advantages for the attack. He lay entrenched on rising ground, behind a deep ravine, about midway between us, to which the ground gently descended from both directions. His front was defended by four 8-inch howitzers, and three long 16-pounders, one 18 pounder, and some of smaller calibre. His right was almost equally strong; and, after crossing the ravine, approached over smooth ground, in the form of a natural glacis, and taken in reverse by a body of rancheros and lancers. The heads of the different divisions were accordingly changed to the right; and, each leaving their horses and batteries behind, slowly wended their way among the volcanic rocks to the ravine, which they passed in front of the small village of San Raymond, out of gunshot of Valencia's batteries. They were now on the firm San Angel road, between Valencia and relief; but Santa Anna, coming out to his support with seven thousand infantry and cavalry, drew up in battle array on the hills of Contreras, to our right. Colonel Riley's brigade, that had been moved to the right earlier in the day, to co-operate with a front attack, and had passed beyond the San Angel road, now falling back upon the village which we had taken possession of, General Smith at once determined to drive away the force threatening our right. By the time his dispositions were made, the sun had set; and, night drawing on, it was feared we should not have light enough for our work. The attack was, therefore, suspended till morning. The troops bivouacked around the village, without food, without shelter, and without fire. It was afterwards determined to return to the original intention of assaulting Valencia's entrenchments, as the dispersion of Santa Anna's force affected but little our principal object.

At 3, a. m., Colonel Riley's brigade was put in motion, followed by General Smith's and General Cadwalader's; General Shields holding the village. During the night, the 9th and 12th regiments, with a company of rifles and some detachments that had been thrown out the previous day, were moved to the ravine in front of the enemy's position, and, after driving in their picquets in the morning, filed off to the right, and took a sheltered position on their left, ready to co-operate with the attacking force in the rear. This force, moving around the base of the hill on which the battery was placed, covered from their view and fire, began about sunrise to show themselves over its crest. Colonel Riley's brigade, sweeping around their rear and right, moved down with great impetuosity, while Gen. Smith attacked their left from the rear. In the meantime Colonel Ransom, pushing across the ravine the force in front, opened his fire upon their front and left. The enemy finding himself thus attacked, and apprehending the main attack from the direction in which we approached the previous day, opened his

heavy battery on his front. But Riley's brigade, carrying everything before them, drove them out between the fires of Smith and Ransom upon that of Shields. They broke at all points, abandoning their artillery, pack train, ammunition, &c. We took 800 prisoners—four generals: Salas, Mendoza, Blanco, and Garcia; four colonels; two commanders of brigades and squadrons, and other officers in proportion. Among the twenty-two pieces of artillery taken, were the two belonging to Washington's battery, taken at Buena Vista. They were retaken by the 4th artillery, the regiment to which they originally belonged. We buried 600 of their dead found on the field. Our loss did not exceed 60. After allowing the troops a little time for refreshment, they were put in march down the San Angel road, to take in reverse the positions of San Antonio and Churubusco. The enemy, finding himself turned, immediately commenced to evacuate his lines at San Antonio; but we moved upon him so rapidly that he had to abandon his guns. General Worth's division, that had masked him in front, followed so close upon his heels as to drive his rear into the defences of Churubusco. In the meantime General Twiggs had taken his position in the front on the battery surrounding the convent, while General Worth seized upon that defending the bridge, and blocking the main road to Mexico. The battle opened fiercely on that side. Generals Shields's and Pierce's brigades were sent to attack in rear. Advancing towards the city of Mexico, until they had passed the stream in rear of Churubusco, they crossed a corn-field on their right, and made for the causeway leading from Churubusco to the capital. This causeway was defended by a large body of infantry and cavalry; the latter extending apparently to the gates of Mexico. The number of infantry was said to be 5,000, and of cavalry 4,000. General Shields forming his line obliquely to that of the enemy; resting either flank upon some buildings on his right and left, and gaining as much on their right flank as possible, brought his men promptly into action. General Pierce, following quickly up, took position to his left, and the howitzer battery opened on his right. The Mexicans made a stout resistance, and the reserve under Major Sumner, composed of the rifle regiment and a squadron of dragoons, was brought to their support. By the time they broke into the corn-field, the enemy began to give way. Worth and Twiggs had forced their front, and they were being driven upon the capital. As soon as the way was clear for the dragoons, they swept over the causeway, charging up to the very gates. Many a fine saddle was emptied by the discharge from their last battery. Captain Kearny, whose troop was leading, lost his left arm, and the rest of his officers were wounded. Our men had done their work well and faithfully. Their exhaustion required rest. The recall was sounded, and we returned to the care of the killed and wounded. Of these we have a goodly number. I fear they will reach nearly 1,000. Many gallant officers are at rest. Colonel Butler, of the South Carolina regiment, bringing his regiment into action, had his horse shot under him; continuing the charge on foot, he was wounded in the leg, and finally shot through the head. Of the

regulars, Captain Thornton, of the dragoons, Captain Burke, 1st artillery, Hanson, Lieutenants Irons, Easley, Hoffman, and Johnson. About 40 are wounded more or less severely. All the engineers are safe. We cannot be sufficiently thankful, nor repay the interest or prayers of our friends in our behalf. The greeting of General Scott by the troops after the action, on seeing the success of all his plans, was loud and vociferous. It must have shaken the "halls of the Montezumas." Their enthusiasm seemed to cheer the Mexican officers in their captivity. The army has implicit confidence in him, and apprehend nothing where he commands. He sees everything, and calculates the cost of every measure; and they know and feel that their lives and labor will not be uselessly expended. During the day, we took 2,700 prisoners, eight generals, thirty-seven pieces of artillery, and ammunition enough for a whole campaign. Their defences were completely turned and their plans upset. We could have entered Mexico that evening or the next morning at our pleasure, so complete was the disorganization of their army of 32,000 men. We learn that 27,000 men were opposed to us at all points on the 20th; and they acknowledge in killed and wounded 5,000. On the 21st, as the army was in motion towards the city, General Scott was met by a proposition for a cessation of hostilities, for the purpose of taking care of the killed and wounded. This he refused; but in the evening agreed to an armistice, to enable commissioners to meet Mr. Trist, and to treat for peace. This armistice has been officially ratified. It is difficult to foresee the result; though I can very well see that it is for Santa Anna's advantage to make peace. So far I can trust him.

The Lieutenant Johnson killed was the nephew of Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, of the voltigeurs. I was standing by him when his leg was carried off above the knee by a cannon ball. He was a gallant little fellow, and as merry over his work all the morning as a boy at play. He fell by the side of the gun he had been effectively serving, and died that night, 19th instant. The Colonel did not hear of his death until next morning. He was standing in Valencia's captured entrenchments, flushed with the recent victory; his frame shrunk and shivered with agony, and I wept to witness his grief. It is the living for whom we should mourn, and not the dead. The engineers did good service on both days; nor was the engineer company behind in any undertaking.

L.

[From the Daily American Star, (Mexico,) October 23, 1847.]

The Leonidas Letter.

The Picayune, of the 20th September, republishes from the Delta a letter written from Mexico, and purporting to give an account of the battles of the 19th and 20th, although the ostensible object

of the writer seems to be the laudation of one general at the expense of all others. We say this seems to be the object of the writer, although the effusion has signally failed to effect that object; but if the seeming be not true, then has the author adopted a singular, though efficient method to injure the subject of the letter, a method which will tend to accomplish more than could possibly be effected by the combined efforts of fifty open and professed enemies.

Before we make any further remark, we will state that General Pillow, the subject of the letter, denies, not only all knowledge of the existence of the letter, but repudiates it in every sense, and says, that if any are so illiberal as to attribute even the knowledge of it to him, they will be convinced of their error when his official reports are seen.

That the letter is a *bona fide* army production, sent from the seat of war after the first battle in this valley, none who will read it can doubt, for there are sentences and expressions contained in it that we heard on the battle field and on the march to San Angel.

We reiterate, the object of the writer is enigmatical to us. He has not only produced a statement of events calculated to draw ridicule upon the head of one officer, but one that seems intended to effect the other gallant officers who participated in those conflicts.

In giving publicity to the letter, the Delta has assumed curious grounds. In the first place, the editor says it came from a distinguished officer of the army, whose name accompanied it, and in one week's time asserts that it is a *hoax*, leaving the inference that it was gotten up to play upon their confrères. A bad subject for a *hoax*, truly, the character and fame of American officers who are exposing their lives for our country's honor.

The Picayune, in republishing it, has of course its comments, and they are unsparing. The home editors of the Picayune have, throughout, pursued a constant hostility towards General Pillow, worthy of a better cause, and it is not strange that they should take advantage of this great blunder to make capital.

In to-day's paper we cannot extend our remarks on this subject, as we intended, and perforce reserve them for another occasion, when the whole subject will be reviewed to the best of our ability. Here follows the letter:

The famous letter of "Leonidas," which has been the theme of so much remark during the past week, is at last given to the public entire; so at least we understand it. The editor of the Bulletin has obtained a copy of it, and, at our request, he has furnished us with a proof of it, which we proceed to lay before our readers. The passages in italics are those which are understood to have been suppressed in the original publication of the letter. We give the document entire without a word of comment.—*Picayune*.

Picayune copy of the Leonidas Letter.

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 Augustine.

This engagement with the enemy commenced on the 19th instant, by the third division, under the immediate command of Major General Pillow, comprising a force of 3,500 men. 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 the support 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 under General Cadwalader; but it was so late that 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, and 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.