

ticular professions and need no instruction. All, or most of our people, are *statesmen* and *soldiers* by nature, as Dogberry, I believe it was, learned to write.

Yours, most truly.

CITY OF MEXICO, October 21, 1847.

MESSRS. EDITORS: Having seen a letter in the *Picayune*, of the 20th ultimo, signed "Leonidas," I feel it my duty to say I know nothing of this letter or of its author.

If there are any disposed to attribute it to me, or who suppose I have given it my sanction, they are as *illiberal* as they are *unjust*.

All candid men, who know me, must be satisfied that I would not, myself, nor would I allow any friend to commit such an act of folly.

I am willing to be judged by my written reports; but I utterly protest against the *injustice* of being held responsible for the anonymous letters of friends or enemies.

Very respectfully,

S.

Official despatches of General Santa Anna.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,
Tehuacan, November 19, 1847.

The despatch of your excellency, under date of the 6th instant, informs me that, in obedience to a decree of the general Congress of which you send me a copy, relative to the documents which may exist relating to the events of the siege and loss of the capital, his excellency, in charge of the supreme executive power, directs that I shall present a report of those military operations, in order to bring them to the knowledge of the supreme government.

Complying with the wishes of the government, and with the duty imposed on me by the character of general-in-chief of the army with which I was invested at that time, I shall proceed at once to give a plain narrative of that part of my operations which is still wanting. Your excellency will perceive by the annexed note, which I was on the point of addressing to your excellency when I received your communication, and which explains its motives and object, that I had already made a report which embraced events which took place anterior to my entrance into the capital at the end of May last.

I have explained in my official documents that the object of my march from Orizaba to Puebla was to increase, equip and organize the small force I had at my command at that date, and to make a

vigorous defence in case I should be assisted by the powerful resources of that State. Unfortunately I found that city dismantled, without troops, without materials of war, as the general commanding had ordered them to other points; and by the near approach of the army of the enemy, who followed my footsteps and left me no time for any undertaking, I was forced to continue my march to the capital of the republic.

I expected to find in the capital great preparations for defence, but discovered instead symptoms of revolution, which were fortunately dispelled by my presence. I also perceived with regret that its abandonment had been determined upon, believing it destitute of means of defence, and that the administration of tobacco, the archives, and other objects, had already commenced being sent to the interior. I hastened on this account to call a meeting of all the generals present, which took place the day after my arrival. In conformity with their decision, I resolved to take charge of the government, an indispensable step in order to prepare for the defence in accordance with my wishes.

As there was so little to dispose of, and as an army, fortifications, materials of war, and above all, money were absolutely indispensable, my difficulties were as great as my efforts were required to be. On this point, I refer to vouchers, which must appear in ministerial departments, and which I beg may be presented by the ministers who had the painful task of being associated with me in those days of affliction. I do not annex them, as at this place I am deprived of my private archives; but the government can easily procure them, in order that it may be made apparent that every thing was attended to, and nothing omitted which could secure a good defence of the capital against a victorious army, provided with every appurtenance required to carry on war with success. His excellency Don Nicolas Bravo, general of division, was appointed general-in-chief of the army of the east, and General Don Manuel Rincon his second in command. His excellency General Don Gabriel Valencia, was also appointed to the army of the north, with General Don Mariano Salas as his second in command. These two generals proceeded at once to their destination; but the other two resigned, a few days afterwards, their appointments; in consequence of which, General Don Manuel Maria Lombardini was nominated general-in-chief of the army of the east, discharging his trust to the satisfaction of the government; until, owing to the approach of the enemy, I took the command-in-chief of the army, in virtue of the extraordinary powers which the supreme congress had been pleased to grant by its decree of the 20th April, for the better success of the war against our invaders. Having designated the points which were to be transiently fortified in the first and second line, not a moment was lost in obtaining materials, laborers, &c., and in less than three months respectable fortifications were raised, which were directed first by the general of brigade, Don Casimiro Liceaga, and afterwards by the chief of engineers, Don Ignacio Mora y Villamil, and these officers not only gave proofs of their skill, but labored with a perseverance and ac-

tivity which must always redound to their honor. Immense sums were invested in so many works, necessary for so extended a radius, but there was never any want of the necessaries, as can be verified by the commissary of the army.

As the ranks of the regular army were exceedingly deficient, it became necessary to have recourse to raw levies and to the bodies of the national guard. There was no clothing in the stores, no supplies, no accoutrements for horses, no utensils of any kind, and it became necessary to procure them by making contracts. Having hardly any muskets, I had to order purchases at any price, and with those thus obtained, of which many were without bayonets, and with such as were repaired in the armory, from those previously rejected, I succeeded in arming my forces. As the *materiel* of war was very scarce, I ordered the indefatigable chief of the artillery, Brigadier General Don Manuel Carrera, to manufacture what was necessary in the large work shops, established for that purpose, where the work was carried on without cessation, and which required large sums of money. Many pieces of artillery were brought from San Luis, and others from the south, and even those cast of iron, which were in bad condition, were rendered fit for service. Nothing was neglected to place the capital in the best state of defence.

On my arrival in the capital, there existed no other sum in the treasury than one hundred and odd thousand dollars, in drafts of the clergy, part of the million and a half granted to the government during the days of my absence, and I obtained the sums which so many and multifarious demands required, in which I was most efficaciously assisted by the minister of finance and his good connections.

In the squares and in the suburbs the recruits were daily drilled, and the chiefs exerted themselves so energetically for the advancement of their corps, that in a few days they were transformed into brilliant brigades, which inspired the most flattering expectations. The fortifications advanced prodigiously. In all directions were seen workshops engaged in making equipments for the troops. Ninety pieces of cannon were got in readiness, and at length 20,000 men were armed and equipped, including in this number 5,000 veterans of the army of the north, and the twenty-four pieces of artillery brought by his excellency General Valencia from San Luis Potosi. Therefore, on the 11th August, when the enemy showed himself in the neighborhood of the Peñon, our situation was imposing, and confidence and enthusiasm were visible in every countenance. I appeal to all the inhabitants of the city to bear witness to this fact. His excellency General Don Nicolas Bravo offered his services, and I placed under his orders the line of Mexicalcingo, Churubusco, and San Antonio. His excellency General Don Juan Alvarez, with the division of cavalry which I placed under his charge, I ordered to station himself in Nanacamilpa in order to gain the rear of the enemy, and to place himself between him and Puebla as soon as he should have passed San Martin Tescmelucan. The instructions given to this general must exist in

the War Department; they were that, following the rear guard of the enemy he should harass whenever possible, and to attack with decision whenever he should see him engaged with any of our fortified points, to take advantage of every error, and to act with due prudence. His excellency Don Gabriel Valencia, with his complete division, I ordered to take position at Texcoco, and transmitted to him instructions which he must have in his possession and which must also be found in the office of the Secretary of War, in the department of operations. His principal object was to watch the enemy, in order that if he should take the direction of Texcoco, he might fall back on Guadalupe Hidalgo, where, taking possession of the fortified positions, he was to await orders and reinforcements; but if the enemy should decide upon attacking the Peñon, then he was to attack his rear guard, in which movement the division of cavalry under the command of General Alvarez was to co-operate, having received timely instruction to act in concert with said general. I proceeded to the Peñon in order to be in front of the enemy and to be able to direct the operations with success. At this point his excellency general of division Don Manuel Rincon presented himself, and I entrusted to him the command of the principal fortifications of that eminence. At the same time, and with equal enthusiasm, his excellency General Don Jose Joaquin de Herrera presented himself to me, and I appointed him my second in command. His excellency General Don José Maria Tornel was also employed as quartermaster general, manifesting the greatest anxiety to serve the nation in this campaign.

As it is impossible to carry in the memory the number of troops, artillery, ammunition, &c., which garrisoned all the points, and as in order to give an exact detail it would be necessary to have before my eyes the general returns, which it is impossible to obtain here, nor the plans, which the director-in-chief of the engineers ought to furnish, I will limit myself to speaking of the events in general, and of my respective measures, reserving to myself to present them with the due requisites and accuracy in the historical sketch which I am preparing, in order that the nation may know how much has been done in its service and who are its faithful servants. The invading army under the orders of General Scott disdained the battle which was offered him at the Peñon, no doubt because our positions appeared to him very strong, and I think his good fortune preserved him from having failed against them, as the Peñon was perfectly fortified, and as even his projectiles could have been of little use to him. In the plan of this important point may be seen the works that had been arranged so skilfully, and the merit of such stupendous labors performed in so few days.

General Scott having taken the direction south of the capital, after reconnoitring the fortifications of Mexicalcingo, which he dared not attack, knowing that there also he could be combatted to advantage, I was under the necessity of changing my head-quarters to San Mateo Churubusco, close to the bridge of San Antonio, the most advanced point of that line. The march of the enemy was

laborious and slow over the road he had to pass, and this time was employed in finishing some fortifications and in improving others. General Alvarez followed the rear guard, burning for an opportunity to attack it. There being no doubt that the design of the enemy was to occupy the city of Tlalpam, General Valencia was instructed to change his position, by withdrawing from Texcoco to the city of Gaudalupe Hidalgo, in order to pass afterwards to the village of San Angel, which he did.

Brevet General Don Francisco Perez, commander of a splendid brigade numbering then 3,000 men, was ordered to take position at Coyoacan, thus covering the line formed by Mexicalcingo, the bridge of Churubusco, the convent of the same name, Coyoacan and San Angel resting on and serving as a reserve for the point next to San Antonio. This place was well fortified and garrisoned, and as all our forces were contiguous, so that they could operate advantageously and promptly, I became anxious that there should be the field of battle. I suspected by some reconnoissances of the enemy that he intended to march on Tacubaya. General Valencia was ordered to fall back on Coyoacan and to supply Churubusco with six pieces of artillery, believing him to be at San Angel, where he ought to have been to wait for further orders. My plan of concentration on the second line was becoming indispensable, and it was also necessary to prepare a safe retreat for the troops and trains at San Antonio. The surprise and indignation which I experienced at the disobedience of my orders by General Valencia can be attested by General Tornel and the minister of war, who handed me his answer at 11 o'clock at night on the 17th of August. The same generals can also reveal the presage which I then made in consequence of so irregular a proceeding which upset all my combinations.

My first determination was to deprive General Valencia of his command, and give the same order to his second in command, but the above named general calmed me by judicious reflections springing from the best intentions; and after a long consultation, in order to avoid a rupture in front of the enemy, I finally consented to inform him that without approving his arbitrary conduct, he might act upon his own responsibility as he might think proper, flattering ourselves, it is true, that this message would make him retrace his steps. Unfortunately, it proved otherwise; he continued stubbornly to pursue the path of perdition which he had marked out, and to-day the nation deplors the result. On the 19th, at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, an aid-de-camp of General Valencia presented himself to me at San Antonio, informing me in his name that the enemy was approaching Padierna, the place where he had of his own accord stationed the division of the north, and added that from the cannonade which he had heard along the road, he considered the battle commenced. This information was to me the confirmation of the great misfortune which I had foretold the night previously, and showed that, in spite of himself, the disobedient general began to see his error. Notwithstanding his irregular conduct, from that moment I only strove to save him

and to save the worthy soldiers which, in an unlucky hour, I had placed under his charge. I therefore despatched an aid to Coyoacan, with orders to march the brigade of General Perez to Padierna, and I started immediately at a gallop for the same point, accompanied by my staff, by the regiments of hussars, and the 2d regiment of Vera Cruz, together with five pieces of artillery. I overtook said brigade issuing from Coyoacan to San Angel, and owing to some cannonading which was heard, I made them accelerate their pace until they reached the height fronting Padierna, from which I could observe the fatal position of General Valencia.

This happened at 5 o'clock in the evening; and although I endeavored to form a junction, it was found impossible, being cut off by the enemy and by the ground which he had left in his rear. There was only one passable road left from San Angel to Padierna, which was very narrow and commanded right and left by positions, of which some battalions of the enemy had already taken possession. I sought a passage by the flanks, but I became convinced by those well acquainted with the locality, and also by my own observation, that it was not easy to undertake any further operation during that evening, as on the right it was rendered impracticable by a deep ravine which extended for more than a league towards some heights situated southeast of San Angel, and by broken ground and rocks on the left. Night having overtaken me during my reconnoitring, I had no other resource than to encamp and wait for the day. Shortly afterwards, a violent storm, accompanied by torrents of rain, obliged me to order the infantry to take shelter in the neighboring village of San Angel, with orders to present themselves at the camp at the break of day, where I left the cavalry and artillery, who passed a cruel night, as it did not cease raining till daylight.

Taking into consideration the sufferings which the army of the north must undergo during the rain, without shelter, and that neither men nor arms would be fit to give battle the next day, desiring also to avoid the defeat which I foresaw, I ordered General Valencia to spike his artillery on that same night, and to fall back upon San Angel, for which purpose he might employ the same guide who conducted my aid, Colonel Don José Maria Ramiro, bearer of my order. Unfortunately, he spurned and disobeyed my order, and remained in that fatal position. Uneasy from the apprehensions which the temerity of General Valencia naturally aroused in me, I ordered, at the first rays of day, the brigade which had taken shelter in San Angel to commence its march. The same was done with the brigade of General Rangel, which I had drawn from the citadel, determined to open a road to Padierna at any cost. I was marching at the head of these brigades when I heard a firing of musketry on my vanguard; the pace was quickened, and before me appeared squads of our cavalry, who were in retreat, and from whom I received the fatal tidings that I apprehended. As soon as I had no longer any doubts about the defeat of General Valencia, I commenced my countermarch with the deepest sorrow. This general, either badly advised, or guided by a blind ambition, thinking a victory easy with the splendid division which he com-