

After so many victories, we might, with but little additional loss, have occupied the capital the same evening. [?] But Mr. Trist, commissioner, etc., as well as myself, had been admonished by the best friends of peace—intelligent neutrals and some American residents—against precipitation; lest, by wantonly driving away the government and others—dishonored—we might scatter the elements of peace, excite a spirit of national desperation, and thus indefinitely postpone the hope of accommodation.*

Deeply impressed with this danger, and remembering our mission—to *conquer a peace*—the army very cheerfully sacrificed to patriotism—to the great wish and want of our country—the *éclat* that would have followed an entrance—sword in hand—into a great

* There were other reasons such as are alluded to in my report of the capture of Vera Cruz. If we had proceeded to assault the city by daylight our loss would have been dangerously great, and if a little later in the night, the slain, on the other side, including men, women, and children, would have been frightful, because if the assailants stopped to make prisoners before occupying all the strongholds, they would soon become prisoners themselves. Other atrocities, by the victors, are, in such cases, inevitable. Pillage always follows, and seems authorized by the usage of war. Hence I promised (September 13), at the gates of Mexico, a contribution in lieu of pillage, in order to avoid the horrors in question, and the consequent loss of discipline and efficiency.

capital. Willing to leave something to this republic—of no immediate value to us—on which to rest her pride, and to recover temper—I halted our victorious corps at the gates of the city (at least for a time), and have them now cantoned in the neighboring villages, where they are well sheltered and supplied with all necessities.

On the morning of the 21st, being about to take up battering or assaulting positions, to authorize me to summon the city to surrender, or to sign an armistice with a pledge to enter at once into negotiations for peace—a mission came out to propose a truce. Rejecting its terms, I despatched my contemplated note to President Santa Anna—omitting the summons. The 22d, commissioners were appointed by the commanders of the two armies; the armistice was signed the 23d, and ratifications exchanged the 24th.

All matters in dispute between the two governments have been thus happily turned over to their plenipotentiaries, who have now had several conferences, and with, I think, some hope of signing a treaty of peace.

There will be transmitted to the Adjutant-General reports from divisions, brigades, etc., on the foregoing

operations, to which I must refer, with my hearty concurrence in the just applause bestowed on corps and individuals by their respective commanders. I have been able—this report being necessarily a summary—to bring out, comparatively, but little of individual merit not lying directly in the way of the narrative. Thus I doubt whether I have, in express terms, given my approbation and applause to the commanders of divisions and independent brigades; but left their fame upon higher grounds—the simple record of their great deeds and the brilliant results.*

To the staff, both general and personal, attached to general headquarters, I was again under high obligations for services in the field, as always in the bureaux. I add their names, etc.: Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock, Acting Inspector-General; Major J. L. Smith, Captain R. E. Lee (as distinguished for felicitous execution as

* *Litera scripta manet.* In this edition of my reports of battles, etc., I, of course, expunge none of the praises therein bestowed on certain division and brigade commanders; but as a caution to future generals-in-chief I must say I soon had abundant reason to know, that I had in haste too confidently relied upon the partial statements of several of those commanders respecting their individual skill and prowess, and the merits of a few of their favorites—subordinates. I except from this remark, Generals Quitman, Shields, P. F. Smith, N. S. Clarke, Riley, and Cadwallader.

for science and daring), Captain Mason, Lieutenants Stevens, Beauregard, Tower, G. W. Smith, George B. McClellan, and Foster—all of the Engineers; Major Turnbull, Captain J. McClellan, and Lieutenant Hardcastle, Topographical Engineers; Captain Huger and Lieutenant Hagner, of the Ordnance; Captains Irwin and Wayne, of the Quartermaster's Department; Captain Grayson, of the Commissariat; Surgeon-General Lawson, in his particular department; Captain H. L. Scott, Acting Adjutant-General; Lieutenant T. Williams, Aide-de-Camp, and Lieutenant Lay, Military Secretary.

Lieutenant Schuyler Hamilton,* another aide-de-camp, had a week before been thrown out of activity by a severe wound received in a successful charge of

* This gallant, intelligent officer being sent with a detachment of cavalry from Chalco to an iron foundry, some fifteen miles off, beyond Mira Flores, to make contingent arrangements for shots and shells—we having brought up but few of either, from the want of road power—returning, fell into an ambuscade, and though he cut his way through, was, while slaying one man in his front, pierced through the body with a lance, by another, and thus thrown *hors de combat* for the remainder of the campaign. In 1861, he, as a private, was in one of the first regiments of volunteers that hastened to the defence of Washington;—again became one of my aides-de-camp, and, in succession, a distinguished brigadier and major-general of volunteers in the Southwest.

cavalry against cavalry, and four times his numbers; but on the 20th, I had the valuable services, as volunteer aids, of Majors Kirby and Van Buren, of the Pay Department, always eager for activity and distinction, and of a third, the gallant Major J. P. Gaines, of the Kentucky Volunteers.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

HON. WM. L. MARCY, *Secretary of War.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

ARMISTICE—NEGOTIATIONS—HOSTILITIES RENEWED—BATTLE OF MOLINOS DEL REY—CAPTURE OF CHAPULTEPEO AND MEXICO.

Report No. 33.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
TACUBAYA, NEAR MEXICO,
September 11, 1847. }

SIR:

I have heretofore reported that I had, August 24, concluded an armistice with President Santa Anna, which was promptly followed by meetings between Mr. Trist and Mexican commissioners appointed to treat of peace.

Negotiations were actively continued with, as was