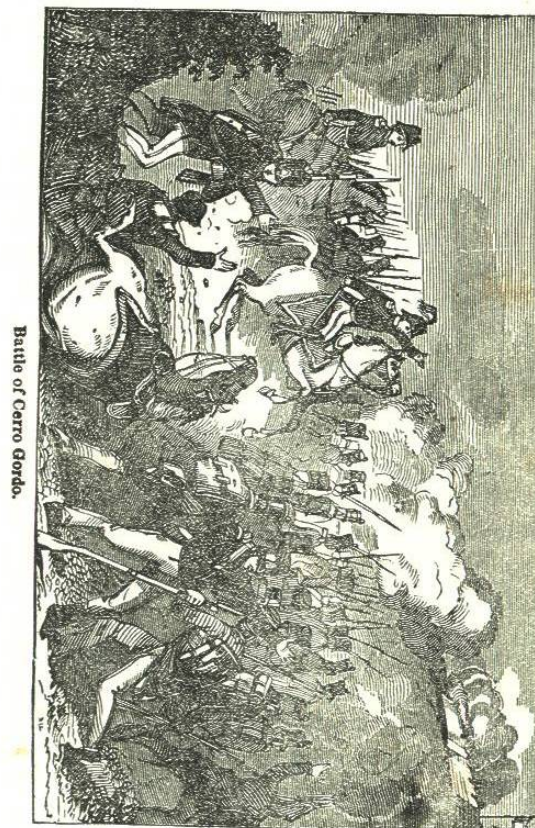


Shields, moved rapidly along the Jalapa road, and took up a position to intercept the retreat of the Mexicans. At the same time General Worth pushed forward toward the left, to aid the movement of Twiggs. The rout was total. Three thousand men, with field and other officers, surrendered, and an immense amount of small arms, ordnance and batteries, were also captured. About six thousand Mexicans gained the rear of the Americans on the Jalapa road, but were closely pursued. The Americans lost two hundred and fifty killed and wounded—among the latter, General Shields; the loss of the Mexicans, exclusive of prisoners, was about one hundred more.

The following description of Twiggs's attack upon the Mexican fort, is from the account of an eye-witness:

"On the 18th, General Twiggs was ordered forward from the position he had already captured, against the fort which commanded the Sierra. Simultaneously an attack on the fortifications on the enemy's left was to be made by Generals Shields and Worth's divisions, who moved in separate columns, while General Pillow advanced against the strong forts and difficult ascents on the right of the enemy's position. The enemy, fully acquainted with General Scott's intended movement, had thrown large bodies of men into the various positions to be attacked. The most serious enterprise was that of Twiggs, who advanced against the main fort that commanded the Sierra. Nothing can be conceived more difficult than this undertaking. The steep and rough character of the ground, the constant fire of the enemy in front, and the cross fire of the forts and batteries which enfiladed our lines, made the duty assigned to General Twiggs one of surpassing difficulty.



Battle of Cerro Gordo.



Nothing prevented our men from being utterly destroyed but the steepness of the ascent under which they could shelter. But they sought no shelter, and onward rushed against a hailstorm of balls and musket-shot, led by the gallant Harney, whose noble bearing elicited the applause of the whole army. His conspicuous and stalwart frame at the head of his brigade, his long arm waving his men on to the charge, his sturdy voice ringing above the clash of arms and din of conflict, attracted the attention and admiration alike of the enemy and of our own men. On, on, he led the columns, whose front lines melted before the enemy's fire like snow-flakes in a torrent, and stayed not their course until leaping over the rocky barriers, and bayoneting their gunners, they drove the enemy pellmell from the fort, delivering a deadly fire into their ranks, from their own guns, as they hastily retired. This was truly a gallant deed, worthy the Chevalier Bayard of our army, as the intrepid Harney is well styled. General Scott, between whom and Colonel Harney there had existed some coolness, rode up to the colonel after this achievement, and remarked to him—'Colonel Harney, I cannot now adequately express my admiration of your gallant achievement, but at the proper time I shall take great pleasure in thanking you in proper terms.' Harney, with the modesty of true valour, claimed the praise as due to his officers and men. Thus did the division of the gallant veteran, Twiggs, carry the main position of the enemy, and occupy the front which commanded the road. It was here the enemy received their heaviest loss, and their general, Vasquez, was killed. A little after, General Worth, having, by great exertions, passed the steep and craggy heights on the enemy's left,



summoned a strong fort in the rear of the Sierra to surrender. This fort was manned by a large force under General Pinzon, a mulatto officer of considerable ability and courage, who, seeing the Sierra carried, thought it prudent to surrender, which he did with all his force. General Shields was not so fortunate in the battery which he attacked, and which was commanded by General La Vega. A heavy fire was opened on him, under which the fort was carried with some loss by the gallant Illinoisians, under Baker and Bennett, supported by the New Yorkers, under Burnett. Among those who fell under this fire was the gallant general, who received a grape-shot through his lungs, by which he was completely paralyzed, and thrown into a critical and dangerous state. On the enemy's right, General Pillow commenced the attack against the strong forts near the river. The Tennesseans, under Haskell, led the column, and the other volunteer regiments followed. This column unexpectedly encountered a heavy fire from a masked battery, by which Haskell's regiment was nearly cut to pieces, and the other volunteer regiments were severely handled. General Pillow withdrew his men, and was preparing for another attack, when the operations at the other points having proved successful, the enemy concluded to surrender. Thus the victory was complete, and four generals, and about six thousand men, were taken prisoners by our army. One of their principal generals and a large number of other officers killed. The Mexican force on this occasion certainly exceeded our own.

According to the account of the captured officers, Santa Anna had in his lines at least eight thousand men,