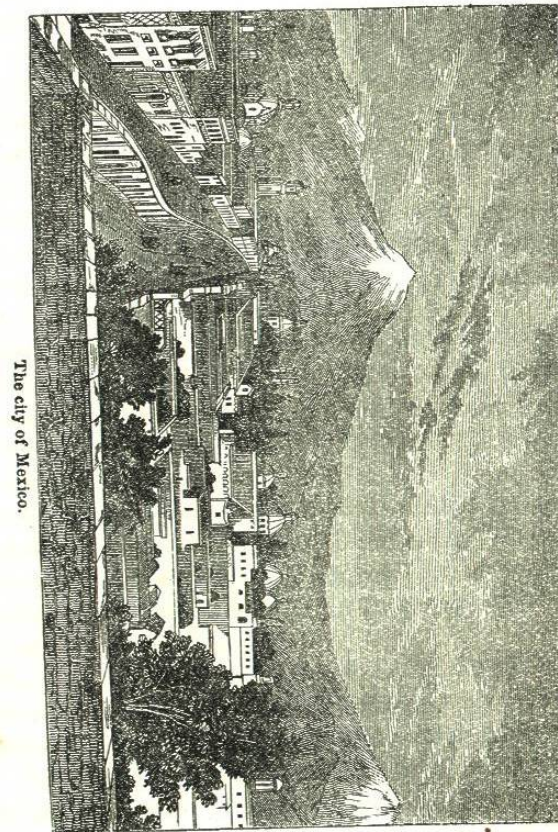


away the government and others—dishonoured—we might scatter the elements of peace, excite a spirit of national desperation, and thus indefinitely postpone the hope of accommodation. Deeply impressed with this danger, and remembering our mission—to conquer a peace—the army very cheerfully sacrificed to patriotism—to the great wish and want of our country—the *eclat* that would have followed an entrance—sword in hand—into a great 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 neighbouring villages, where they are well sheltered and supplied with all necessaries.

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 a peace—a mission came out to propose a truce. Rejecting its forms, 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.

Negotiations were actively continued with, as was understood, some prospect of a successful result up to the 2d inst., when our commissioner handed in his *ultimatum*, (on boundaries,) and the negotiators adjourned to meet on the 6th.

Some infractions of the truce, in respect to our supplies from the city, were earlier committed, followed by



The city of Mexico.



apologies on the part of the enemy. Those vexations I was willing to put down to the imbecility of the government, and waived pointed demands of reparation while any hope remained of a satisfactory termination of the war. But on the 5th, and more fully on the 6th, I learned that as soon as the *ultimatum* had been considered in a grand council of ministers and others, President Santa Anna, on the 4th or 5th, without giving me the slightest notice, actively recommenced strengthening the military defenses of the city, in gross violation of the third article of the armistice.

On that information which has since received the fullest verification, I addressed to him a note on the 6th. His reply dated the same day, received the next morning, was absolutely and notoriously false, both in recrimination and explanation.

Being delayed by the terms of the armistice more than two weeks, we had now, late on the 7th, to begin to reconnoiter the different approaches to the city, within our reach, before I could lay down any definitive plan of attack.

The same afternoon a large body of the enemy was discovered hovering about the *Molinos del Rey* within a mile and a third of this village, where I am quartered with the general staff and Worth's division.

It might have been supposed that an attack upon us was intended; but knowing the great value to the enemy of those mills (*Molinos del Rey*) containing a cannon foundry, with a large deposit of powder in *Casa Mata* near them; and having heard, two days before, that many church bells had been sent out to be cast into guns—the enemy's movement was easily understood,



and I resolved, at once, to drive him early the next morning; to seize the powder and to destroy the foundry.

Another motive for this decision—leaving the general plan of attack upon the city for full reconnoissance—was, that we knew our recent captures had left the enemy not a fourth of the guns necessary to arm, all at the same time, the strong works at each of the eight city gates, and we could not cut the communication between the foundry and the capital without first taking the formidable castle on the heights of Chapultepec which overlooked both and stood between. For this difficult operation we were not entirely ready, and moreover we might altogether neglect the castle, if, as we then hoped, our reconnoissances should prove that the distant southern approaches to the city were more eligible than this south-western approach.

Hence the decision promptly taken, the execution of which was assigned to Brevet Major-General Worth, whose division was reinforced with Cadwalader's brigade, of Pillow's division, three squadrons of dragoons, under Major Sumner, and some heavy guns of the siege train under Captain Huger, of the ordnance, and Captain Drum of the 4th artillery—two officers of the highest merit."

For the particulars of this decisive and brilliant result, General Scott refers to General Worth's despatch, and the reader will find them in the life of that officer, in a subsequent part of this book.

The enemy having several times reinforced his line, the action soon becoming much more general than I had expected, I called up from the distance of three

miles; first, Major-General Pillow, with his remaining brigade, (Pierce's,) and next Riley's brigade of Twiggs's division—leaving his other brigade (Smith's) in observation at San Angel. Those corps approached with zeal and rapidity; but the battle was won just as Brigadier-General Pierce reached the ground and had interposed his corps between Garland's brigade (Worth's division) and the retreating enemy.

General Worth's report mentions, with just commendation, two of my volunteer aids—Major Kirby, paymaster, and Major Gaines of the Kentucky volunteers. I also had the valuable services, on the same field, of several other officers of my staff, general and personal:—Lieutenant-Colonel Hitchcock, acting inspector-general; Captain R. E. Lee, engineer; Captain Irwin, chief quartermaster; Captain Grayson, chief commissary; Captain H. L. Scott, acting assistant adjutant-general; Lieutenant Williams, aid-de-camp, and Lieutenant Lay, military secretary."

"At the end of another series of arduous and brilliant operations, of more than forty-eight hours continuance, this glorious army hoisted, on the morning of the 14th of September, the colours of the United States on the walls of the national palace of Mexico.

The victory of the 8th, at the Molinos del Rey, was followed by daring reconnoissances on the part of our distinguished engineers, Captain Lee, Lieutenants Beauregard, Stevens, and Tower—Major Smith, senior, being sick, and Captain Mason, third in rank, wounded. Their operations were directed principally to the south—toward the gates of the Piedad, San Angel, (Nino Perdido,) San Antonio, and the Paseo de la Viga.



This city stands on a slight swell of ground, near the centre of an irregular basin, and is girdled with a ditch in its greater extent—a navigable canal of great breadth and depth—very difficult to bridge, in the presence of an enemy, and serving at once for drainage, custom-house purposes, and military defense—leaving eight intrenches or gates, over arches—each of which we found defended by a system of strong works that seemed to require nothing but some men and guns to be impregnable.

Outside and within the cross fires of those gates, we found to the south other obstacles but little less formidable. All the approaches near the city are over elevated causeways, cut in many places (to oppose us) and flanked, on both sides, by ditches also of unusual dimensions.—The numerous cross roads are flanked in like manner, having bridges at the intersections, recently broken. The meadows thus checked, are, moreover, in many spots, under water or marshy; for, it will be remembered, we were in the midst of the wet season, though with less rain than usual, and we could not wait for the fall of the neighbouring lakes and the consequent drainage of the wet grounds at the edge of the city—the lowest in the whole basin.

After a close personal survey of the southern gates, covered by Pillow's division and Riley's brigade of Twiggs's—with four times our numbers, concentrated in our immediate front—I determined, on the 11th, to avoid the net work of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion, to the south-west and west, less unfavourable approaches.

To economize the lives of our gallant officers and

men, as well as to insure success, it became indispensable that this resolution should be long masked from the enemy, and again that the new movement, when discovered, should be mistaken for a feint, and the old as indicating our true and ultimate point of attack.

Accordingly, on the spot, the 11th, I ordered Quitman's division from Coyoacan, to join Pillow *by daylight*, before the southern gates, and then that the two major-generals, with their divisions, should, *by night*, proceed (two miles) to join me, at Tacubaya, where I was quartered with Worth's division. Twiggs, with Riley's brigade and Captains Taylor's and Steptoe's field batteries—the latter twelve-pounders—was left in front of those gates—to manœuvre, to threaten, or to make false attacks, in order to occupy and deceive the enemy. Twiggs's other brigade (Smith's,) was left at supporting distance, in the rear, at San Angel, till the morning of the 13th, and also to support our general depot at Miscoaque. The stratagem against the south was admirably executed throughout the 12th and down to the afternoon of the 13th, when it was too late for the enemy to recover from the effects of his delusion.

The first step in the new movement was to carry Chapultepec, a natural and isolated mound, of great elevation, strongly fortified at its base, on its acclivities and heights. Besides a numerous garrison, here was the military college of the republic, with a large number of sub-lieutenants and other students. Those works were within direct gun-shot of the village of Tacubaya, and until carried, we could not approach the city on the west without making a circuit too wide and too hazardous.

In the course of the same night, (that of the 11th,)



heavy batteries, within easy ranges, were established. No. 1, on our right, under the command of Captain Drum, 4th artillery, (relieved late next day, for some hours, by Lieutenant Andrews, of the 3d,) and No. 2, commanded by Lieutenant Hagner, ordnance—both supported by Quitman's division. Nos. 3 and 4, on the opposite side, supported by Pillow's division, were commanded, the former by Captain Brooks and Lieutenant S. S. Anderson, 2d artillery, alternately, and the latter by Lieutenant Stone, ordnance. The batteries were traced by Captain Huger and Captain Lee, engineer, and constructed by them, with the able assistance of the young officers of those corps and the artillery.

To prepare for an assault it was foreseen that the play of the batteries might run into the second day; but recent captures had not only trebled our siege pieces, but also our ammunition, and we knew that we should greatly augment both by carrying the place. I was, therefore, in no haste in ordering an assault before the works were well crippled by our missiles.

The bombardment and cannonade, under the direction of Captain Huger, were commenced early in the morning of the 12th. Before nightfall, which necessarily stopped our batteries, we had perceived that a good impression had been made on the castle and its outworks, and that a large body of the enemy had remained outside towards the city, from an early hour, to avoid our fire, and to be at hand, on its cessation, in order to reinforce the garrison against an assault. The same outside force was discovered the next morning after our batteries had reopened upon the castle, by which we again reduced its garrison to the minimum needed for the guns.

