

also within easy supporting distance from the San Angel (or *Nino Perdido*) and San Antonio gates. Hence the greatest support, in numbers, given to Worth's movement as the main attack.

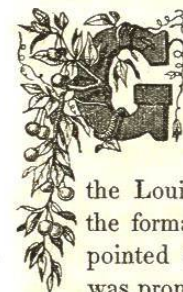
Those views I repeatedly, in the course of the day, communicated to Major-General Quitman; but, being in hot pursuit—gallant himself, and supported by Brigadier-Generals Shields and Smith—Shields badly wounded before Chapultepec, and refusing to retire—as well as by all the officers and men of the column—Quitman continued to press forward, under flank and direct fires—carried an intermediate battery of two guns, and then the gate, before two o'clock in the afternoon, but not without proportionate loss, increased by his steady maintenance of that position.

Quitman, within the city—adding several new defenses to the position he had won, and sheltering his corps as well as practicable—now awaited the return of daylight under the guns of the formidable citadel, yet to be subdued.

In the night the Mexican army fled from the city, and I communicated, about daylight, orders to Worth and Quitman to advance slowly and cautiously, (to guard against treachery,) towards the heart of the city, and to occupy its stronger and more commanding points. Quitman proceeded to the great *plaza*, or square, planted guards, and hoisted the colours of the United States on the national palace—containing the halls of Congress and executive departments of federal Mexico."



GENERAL PERSIFER F. SMITH.

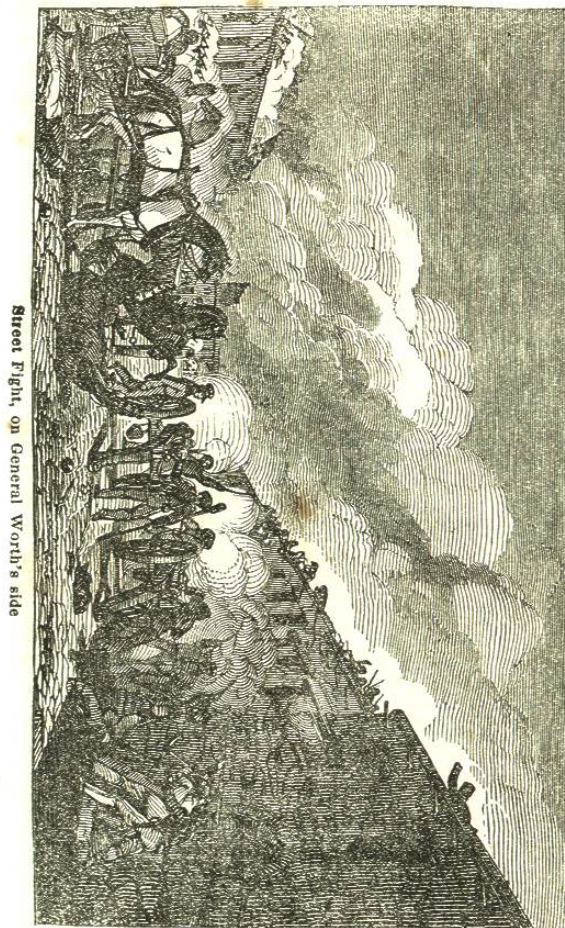


GENERAL PERSIFER F. SMITH, "of Louisiana," as he is generally designated, is a native of Philadelphia, and one of the bravest men and best soldiers in the army. He served in command of the Louisiana troops in the Florida war, and on the formation of the volunteer division was appointed colonel of the rifles. In six months he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general by brevet. This was for his services at Monterey. He led the right wing of Worth's division at the entering of that city, and fought his way through one street while Worth was engaged in the next with the other part of his division. This terrible warfare is thus described by S. C. Reid, Esq., in his work on the Scouting Expeditions of McCulloch's Texas Rangers.

"Every street was barricaded with heavy works of masonry, the walls being some three or four feet thick,

with embrasures for one or more guns which raked the streets; the walls of gardens and sides of houses were all loop-holed for musketry; the tops of the houses were covered with troops, who were sheltered behind parapets, some four feet high, upon which were piled sand bags for their better protection, and from which they showered down a hurricane of balls.

Between three and four o'clock, from the cessation of the fire in the opposite direction, it was evident that the enemy had become disengaged, which enabled them to draw off men and guns to our side, as their fire had now become almost doubly increased. The street-fight became appalling—both columns were now closely engaged with the enemy, and steadily advanced inch by inch—our artillery was heard rumbling over the paved streets, galloping here and there, as the emergency required, and pouring forth a blazing fire of grape and ball—volley after volley of musketry, and the continued peals of artillery became almost deafening—the artillery of both sides raked the streets, the balls striking the houses with a terrible crash, while amid the roar of battle were heard the battering instruments used by the Texans. Doors were forced open, walls were battered down—entrances made through the longitudinal walls, and the enemy driven from room to room, and from house to house, followed by the shrieks of women, and the sharp crack of the Texan rifles. Cheer after cheer was heard in proud and exulting defiance, as the Texans or regulars gained the house-tops by means of ladders, while they poured in a rain of bullets upon the enemy on the opposite houses. It was indeed a most strange and novel scene of warfare."



Street Fight, on General Worth's side

In history General Smith will be best known as the hero of Contreras. An article in the New York Courier and Inquirer, giving an account of this battle, contains the following passages. "About two p. m., as we had crawled to the top of a hill, whither we had been ourselves pulling Magruder's battery and the mountain howitzers, we suddenly espied Valencia fortified on a hill two hundred yards off, and strongly reinforced by a column which had just come out of the city. We lay down close to avoid drawing their fire, while the battery moved past at a full gallop. Just then General Smith's manly voice rung out, '*Forward the rifles—to support the battery.*' On they went, till we got about eight hundred yards from the work, when the enemy opened upon them with his long guns, which were afterwards found to be sixteens and eight-inch howitzers. The ground was the worst possible for artillery, covered with rocks large and small, prickly pears and cactus, intersected by ditches filled with water and lined with maguey plant, itself impervious to cavalry, and with patches of corn which concealed the enemy's skirmishers, while it impeded our own passage. The artillery advanced but slowly, under a most tremendous fire, which greatly injured it before it could be got in range, and the thickness of the undergrowth caused the skirmishers thrown forward to lose their relative position, as well as the column. About four the battery got in position under a most murderous fire of grape, canister, and round shot. Here the superiority of the enemy's pieces rendered our fire nugatory. We could get but *three* pieces in battery, while they had *twenty-seven*, all of them three times the calibre of ours. For two hours

our troops stood the storm of iron and lead they hailed upon them, unmoved. At every discharge they laid flat down to avoid the storm, and then sprang up to serve the guns. At the end of that time, two of the guns were dismounted and we badly hurt; thirteen of the horses were killed and disabled, and fifteen of the cannoneers killed and wounded. The regiment was then recalled. The lancers had been repelled in three successive charges. The 3d infantry and 1st artillery had also engaged and successfully repelled the enemy's skirmishers without loss of either officers or men. The greatest loss has been at the batteries. Officers looked gloomy for the first day's fight, but the brigade was formed, and General Smith in person took command. All felt revived, and followed him with a yell, as creeping low to avoid the grape, which was coming very fast, we made a circuit in rear of the batteries, and passing off to the right we were soon lost to view in the chaparral and cactus. Passing over the path that we scrambled through, behold us, at almost six o'clock in the evening, tired, hungry, and sorrowful, emerging from the chaparral and crossing the road between it and Valencia. Here we found Cadwalader and his brigade already formed, and discovered Riley's brigade skirmishing in rear of the enemy's works. Valencia was ignorant of our approach, and we were as yet safe. In front of us was Valencia strongly intrenched on a hill-side and surrounded by a regular field-work concealed from us by an orchard in our rear. Mendoza with a column of six thousand was in the road, but thinking us to be friends. On our right was a large range of hills, whose continued crest was parallel to the road, and in which were formed

in line of battle five thousand of the best Mexican cavalry. On our left we were separated from our own forces by an almost impassable wilderness, and it was now twilight. Even Smith looked round for help. Suddenly a thousand *vivas* came across the hill-side, like the yells of prairie wolves in the dead of night, and the squadrons on our right formed for charging. Smith's himself again! 'Face to the rear!' 'Wait till you see their red caps, and then give it to them!' Furiously they came on a few yards, then changed their minds, and, disgusted at our cool reception, retired to their couches.

* * * * *

At last, just at daylight, General Smith, slowly walking up, asked if all was ready. A look answered him. 'Men, forward.' And we *did* 'forward.' Springing up at once, Riley's brigade opened, when the crack of a hundred rifles started the Mexicans from their astonishment, and they opened their fire. Useless fire, for we were so close that they overshot us, and before they could turn their pieces on us we were on them. Then such cheers arose as you never heard. The men rushed forward like demons, yelling and firing the while. The carnage was frightful, and though they fired sharply it was of no use. The earthen parapet was cleared in an instant, and the blows of the stocks could be plainly heard, mingled with the yells and groans around. Just before the charge was made, a large body of lancers came winding up the road, looking most splendidly in their brilliant uniforms. They never got to the work, but turned and fled. In an instant all was one mass of confusion, each trying to be foremost in the flight. The road was literally blocked up, and while many perished

by their own guns, it was almost impossible to fire on the mass, from the danger of killing our own men. Some fled up the ravine on the left, or on the right, and many of these were slain by turning their own guns on them. Toward the city the rifles and 2d infantry led off the pursuit. Seeing that a large crowd of the fugitives were jammed up in a pass in the road, some of our men ran through the corn-field, and by thus heading them off and firing down upon them, about thirty men took over five hundred prisoners, nearly a hundred of them officers.

After disarming the prisoners, as the pursuit had ceased, we went back to the fort, where we found our troops in full possession, and the rout complete.

Thus ended the glorious battle of Contreras, in which two thousand men, under General P. F. Smith, completely routed and destroyed an army of eight thousand men, under General Valencia, with Santa Anna and a force of twenty thousand men within five miles. Their army was so completely routed that not fifteen hundred men rejoined Santa Anna, and participated in the second battle.