

Democratic Banner.

BY MOORE & THOMPSON.

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TERMS

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Further Particulars of the late Battles at the City of Mexico.

From the Washington Union.
THE BATTLE.

We lay before our readers some further details of one of the proudest events of the present day. In addition to the letter of Mr. Kendall of the Picayune, embracing many of the incidents of the several engagements, and the list of the honored dead, and of those who have been wounded, and shed their precious blood in the cause of their country, we publish a letter from a highly gifted officer of the army, which presents the most graphic and correct details which we have yet seen. It is a letter never intended for the public; but it bespeaks a taste and talent which would do honor to any writer. The details are, of course, correct; because they come from an eye witness and an actor in the stirring scenes, who has the judgment to seize the most important events, and the power to describe them.

Perhaps the history of this continent does not furnish a more daring and splendid achievement. The bosom of every American swells with pleasure and with pride at this glorious event. The Mexicans fought to defend their capital. They were acquainted with the country. They knew all its strong and all its weak points. They knew where to defend and where to strengthen them. They had collected artillery enough to make any position which they might take formidable to any assailant. The country itself presents fastnesses at almost every step—mountains which were to be ascended, and passes which were to be overcome. Thus entrenched, the Mexicans could bring into the action about 30,000 men, or more, of all arms—of regulars and volunteers.—They had their best generals in the field. We had from 13,000 to 15,000 troops, the best perhaps in the world, excellently equipped in other respects, but decidedly inferior in the number and character of the artillery; but they were scattered to make different attacks, and they presented only about 6,000 to meet the Mexican masses at one point. Our troops had the advantage of superior skill and discipline, of confidence and experience, and of an indomitable courage which knew no fear and defied every danger. It was these high qualities in the soldier and all these professional attainments of the officers which constituted our strength and gave us the decided victory in the engagement. One of the Mexican correspondents is grossly incorrect, when he says that his countrymen offered the bayonet and we declined it. On the contrary, as the gallant Worth writes, we vanquished them principally by the force of the bayonet.—The superiority of our arms is demonstrated by the result of the several battles in which we were engaged. We drove the enemy from all their boasted entrenchments. We bravely overcame and then captured all their artillery and all their munitions. We seized all their strong points which they had entrenched. We have killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, five or six thousand, it is estimated, and we have lost about one thousand of our own gallant troops. We have retaken the two cannon which we lost at Buena Vista, and wrested from them the only trophies of the war of which they boasted. We have taken prisoners the Riley corps of those infamous deserters who had abandoned the service of a free people. We pursued the flying enemy to the very gates of the capital, and would have taken it, if a desire to negotiate a peace had not arrested the victorious general in mid career. We can seize the city whenever we please. We have forced them to open negotiations, and to listen to terms which Santa Anna had so recently refused to consider. The confusion and the consternation which we had produced were so great, that they were glad to avail themselves of a temporary armistice, and enter into negotiation. Policy may have partially contributed to this delay; but it was the alarm which they had conceived which principally operated upon their hitherto reluctant commander.

Thanks be to our brave and indomitable countrymen. Thanks to our regulars and to our volunteers. Thanks to the brave and experienced Scott. Thanks to his gallant associates—to Pillow, to Quitman, to Worth, to Twiggs, to Codwallader, to Smith, to Shields, (whom death seems to have spared only to add another evergreen laurel to his brow!) Thanks to the brave officers who have shared their dangers as well as their honors. Thanks to the brave men who have looked danger and death in the face, and who have proved themselves worthy of the glorious republic in which their lot has been cast. Words cannot do adequate justice to the unconquerable courage, the lofty patriotism they have displayed, the inexhaustible glory which they have reflected upon their country.

Nor can language do full justice to the brave men who have poured out their blood and sacrificed their lives on the altar of

the republic. Their blood is beyond all price. Their lives are, indeed, too precious to be sacrificed, except for the glory of their country. We know how to appreciate their loss—the heart of every patriot feels for their untimely end. Public gratitude will erect a monument to their memory. And while we weave the cypress with the laurel, who does not sympathize intensely with their disconsolate families? The following letter specifies some of the honored dead—the chivalrous ex-Governor Colonel Pierce Butler, of South Carolina, Captain Thornton, of Virginia, who has passed through so many eventful scenes from the very commencement of the war, and other officers, whose names are registered in the list of killed and wounded. Judging by the number who have fallen in the battle, never was there a braver and nobler set of men gathered under the eagles of their country. We may expect the official details in a few days. We shall then be better able to estimate the loss we have received and the services which our brave men have rendered. We shall leave to military men to analyze the details of the conflict, and to do justice to the skill which has been displayed in evolutions, and the bravery with which they have been executed.

As to the results which the battle is destined to produce upon the war, we are unable to calculate them with precision.—Nor would we be willing, from various considerations, if we had more elements of calculation before us, to enter into anything like a decided speculation upon the consequences. Peace may come, or the war may be continued—we will not undertake to pronounce a positive opinion. We are not certain of peace, whilst we cannot but entertain some hope of it. Yet this we may be leave to repeat, that this decisive victory places the capital of the Mexicans at the mercy of our army. The consternation caused by the rout of their army has induced the enemy to enter into negotiation for peace. The issue of this negotiation is not to be counted on with confidence. The firmness with which the war has been prosecuted has brought the infatuated Mexicans to enter on the discussion of peace. After the panic of the moment is past, they may again manifest their insane obstinacy in prolonging the war. There should be no relaxation of our efforts, no pause in our preparations, until a peace is conquered, and a ratified treaty shall secure its continuance.

Extract of a very interesting letter received in Washington city:

"TAOUBAYA, (in full view of the city of Mexico,) August 24, 1847.

"The army left Puebla on the 8th of this month, and, after a few days' march, reached Ayotla, immediately on the margin of the valley of Mexico. Between this place and the city, about four miles distant, we knew there was a strongly fortified position, called St. Pinon; it is a small isolated mountain, surrounded by water, on one side of one of the principal causeways leading to the city. After spending a day or two in reconnoitering this place, and which it would have caused a great loss of life to have taken, it was ascertained that there was a practicable road south of Lake Chalco. The General determined to take this route, and put the army in motion, leaving our division to watch the enemy in our rear. The march was a dreadful one, being the rainy season. The road was in many places, where it passes at the foot of the mountains, and on the margin of the lake or narrow causeway, nearly covered with water, and excessively muddy; at others it was over rocky spaces of the mountains, and in places entirely obstructed by huge rocks rolled down by the enemy; but nothing seemed to dampen the ardor of the army—all obstacles vanished before them. In two or three days, when the whole army was in motion, they could be seen from the front stretched out over a distance of seven or eight miles. On the 18th, the General reached a small town called San Augustin, about twelve miles south of the city, the leading division having arrived there the day before. General Worth had placed his pickets in advance for the arrival of the General; he ordered the whole division to advance and take possession of a hacienda within striking distance of a strongly fortified place called San Antonio, and also that reconnoitering parties should be pressed forward still in advance; the party was supported by a squadron of cavalry and a battalion of infantry. In passing to the front, I found that a troop which had been placed as a picket had gone forward; and as I came up with it, it made a turn in the road which brought it in full view of the enemy's battery, which opened upon them. The first fire killed Capt. Thornton, mangling his body in the most horrid manner. The ball, a 16 pounder, afterwards struck the road, and literally covered me with mud and fragments of stone, one of which made a slight bruise on my right thigh. A guide was knocked from his horse within five feet of me, with a shocking wound in the head by a piece of stone. It is thought he will recover, but with the loss of an eye. The reconnoissance was continued right and left with some hopes of storming the battery that afternoon; but night and the rain came on, and it was given up. Very early the next morning, I discovered from

the top of the house where we were quartered in San Antonio, a large body of the enemy some 12,000 or 15,000 on our left, about three miles distant. The General had ordered reconnoissances in that direction towards San Angel, where I reported to him. He immediately ordered two divisions forward under Pillow and Twiggs, and followed soon after himself. The enemy were found in an entrenched camp, at a place called Contreras, with twenty pieces of artillery, some of them very heavy siege pieces. The attack commenced at noon, and firing continued incessantly until dark, when it ceased on both sides, our troops maintaining their ground and occupying a village close by. During the afternoon we watched the movements of our troops with the most fearful anxiety, and could plainly see one of our columns resist a charge of a large body of cavalry, and the enemy falling from their saddles and taking to their heels, or rather to their horses' heels. During the whole of the fight, we could see on the right a body of at least ten thousand infantry and cavalry in reserve, towards the city; but they had not the courage to advance, although Santa Anna himself was said to be there.—The attack was ordered to be renewed at 3 o'clock next morning, and the General returned to San Augustin. He left at an early hour, taking with him Gen. Worth's and one half of his division as a reinforcement; but en route he was met by an officer, who reported that the batteries had been carried by our troops in a most gallant style, Col. Riley leading the assault. As he approached the scene of action, it seemed most incredible how our men got over the ground to the attack. It was over immense masses of lava thrown up in the roughest, sharpest possible shapes, and covered with dense brushwood. Streams had to be crossed and deep ravines; and most of them having passed the night in a pattering rain without shelter, it appears almost incredible that they should be able to drive double their numbers from a battery of 23 heavy guns. The scene of the arrival of the General was most exciting. The cheering of the troops left to protect the property taken, and their delight on seeing him, was very gratifying. Many of the guns taken have been added to our siege train. The amount of ammunition taken exceeded by three times the whole which we brought from Vera Cruz, so that we are well provided. But the greatest cause of exultation was the recapture of two of our own guns, brought from Buena Vista, the last battle of General Taylor. When I saw the U. S. on them, I felt like dismounting and embracing them. What is remarkable about their recapture, it was made by the 4th artillery, to which regiment they formerly belonged. They, with other small captured pieces, were immediately fitted up as a light battery, and the captain (Dunn) took command of it. The General, when he received the intelligence of this victory, sent Gen. Worth back to make a demonstration on San Antonio, whilst he, with the portion of the army which was pressing the enemy, should get in its rear. I will not stop to describe the scene on the field of battle. On leaving it, the road was literally strewn with dead Mexicans, arms, broken carriages, &c. In passing a bridge, I looked over, and saw the bodies of at least twenty piled one on the other, and the bank of the stream was strewn with them, and it was some distance before we got out of sight. Going on, we came to a church, in which were confined 700 prisoners. The General halted a few minutes, and addressed the officers very kindly. Amongst them were four generals. He then hurried out to join the pursuing army. We came up with them at San Angel, where they had halted. As the General passed along the line, it was one continued shout. After a few minutes we passed on to a village called Coyoacan, where we heard firing on our right, about two miles off, in the direction of San Antonio. The General immediately sent me, with Capt. Kearny's troop, to ascertain the state of affairs.—We galloped on; and on approaching the place, I found that Worth had turned the place by both flanks, and driven the enemy from it, and was in hot pursuit of them. I returned to the General as quickly as I had gone, and as I galloped along I heard a brisk firing in front. When I reached him I found that he was fiercely engaged with the enemy at another strongly entrenched position—San Pablo. This action lasted more than two hours, and the firing was more general and more continuous than any I had heard yet. The enemy's grape and canister flew like hail, and the fire of our infantry was one continued volley. Capt. Taylor's battery was obliged to retire, being most sadly crippled—lost two officers, a great many men, and left the field with only two horses to a gun; but the enemy, although behind entrenchedments, with heavy guns, could not withstand the impetuosity and valor of our troops. The place was carried by assault, and the whole armament and a great number of prisoners were taken. In the meantime, Worth having hotly pursued the enemy, came up with him at another fortified place in advance of San Pablo, called Churubusco, and after an obstinate resistance, carried it, made many prisoners, and drove the enemy before him. The dragoons pursued and followed him to the very gates of the city. Two officers are

said to have been killed inside the entrenchments of the gateway. Thus ended the day; and I think you will agree with me that it was a TOLERABLY active one—four distinct battles having been fought and won, and the enemy outnumbering us in each at least three to four times. They acknowledge to have had thirty thousand men in the field on that day; and yet we drove them on every occasion, and, in the end, made more than twenty-three hundred prisoners, among them seven of their principal generals, and about forty pieces of cannon. Our loss, I am sorry to say, as may be expected, has been very great. It may possibly reach one thousand killed and wounded; but the returns are not yet in; but enough is known to satisfy us that we have lost many very valuable officers. Among the prisoners taken, I was mortified to see between 50 and 70 deserters from our army, with the Mexican uniform on. A court is in session to try them; and I trust that many of them will be punished. It is pretty well known from their position in the battle of San Pablo, that a volley from them killed and wounded sixteen out of seventeen of the second infantry, including an officer, and leaving one officer (the adjutant of the regiment) standing.

"The next morning, the General, leaving a hospital and a garrison in San Augustin, set off with a determination of reaching this place before night. Halting at Coyoacan a short time, to allow time for his various orders for the movement of the troops to be executed, he was met by a flag from the city, asking terms. After making his reply, the bearer of the flag, a general of engineers, very civilly proposed to the General, knowing his intention of coming here, that if he would halt a few hours longer he would request his government to send word to the castle of Chapultepec not to fire on us as we approached. But the General replied that it was his intention to come here, and he would take the risk; and on he went. On approaching the town, the General sent me forward with an order to Col. Harney, of the dragoons, to take possession of it, and make the necessary disposition of pickets, &c., and wait the arrival of General Worth before unloading his horses.

"We rode into town without molestation; but a troop, which had accompanied Capt. Lee, in advance, had preceded us. It was lucky for us that Chapultepec did not fire upon us; for the town is in perfect range of its guns, and might have knocked us into a cocked hat. Worth's division did not arrive until near dark, and we have none but dragoons with us. The same evening another flag was received from the city.—I will not pretend to give the objects. Several have been interchanged since; and I am happy to say, that an armistice was this day agreed upon, with the object of negotiating for a peace. The terms were dictated by the General, and everything looks as favorably as may be. The General, very magnanimously, and very discreetly, no doubt, too, did not ask a surrender of the city, as it is virtually under his control; and to have taken the army into it, would have been productive of some trouble, as it would be next to impossible to control the troops. We are occupying the Bishop's Palace, a huge pile of buildings with magnificent gardens attached, but as uncomfortable as can be, there being no furniture. The view from here, tho' is beyond description. Chapultepec, a little on the left, looks frowning down upon us with its heavy guns, and the city, with its innumerable spires, nearly surrounded by water, is directly in front. But I have not space for further description."

The following letters are from KENDALL, one of the editors of the N. O. Picayune, the contents of which may be relied upon:

TAOUBAYA, Aug. 27, 1847.

The official report of General Salas, who was second in command at Contreras, and who is now a prisoner, has been published in Mexico. He admits that his defeat was total, but, as usual, lays the blame on some of his brother officers. He says that on the afternoon of the 19th—(this was while no one was returning their fire)—the Mexicans fought with uncommon valor and enthusiasm, but that only on the morning of the 20th August they were suddenly surrounded, and at once thrown into confusion, and, in the end, utterly routed.

Salas says that at the outset of the disorder he shouted "Victory for Mexico," ordered the trumpets to sound, and directed General Torrejon to charge with his lancers; but according to the same account, that officer fled in the most cowardly manner, the infantry got mixed up with the cavalry and also fled, and the route of all was complete and most disastrous. Salas says that Gen. Valencia ran off at the commencement of the fight; that he does not know what has become of him, and for this reason has felt himself called upon to make a report.

General Salas himself acknowledges that in this battle General Frontera was killed; that, besides himself, Generals Mendoza, Blanco and Garcia were wounded and taken prisoners, in addition to a list of over 100 other officers—colonels, captains, &c.—who were either killed, wounded, or are now in our hands. And here let me mention one fact in relation

to the after battle of Churubusco, which will show how near General Scott was capturing the entire army. At the time General Worth was pressing upon the *tete de point*, General Twiggs upon the church, and Gens. Shields and Pierce upon the hacienda farther on, the commander-in-chief ordered Major Sumner to take command of the rifles, and by a circuitous march to reach the road between the enemy and the city.

Nothing but the daring impetuosity of our own men in front prevented this plan from succeeding. Had the Mexicans held out, or our own soldiers held off, ten minutes longer the enemy would have been in a bag, as it were, and killed or captured to a man. Santa Anna might, perhaps, have escaped, as he has a peculiar way of his own; but he would not have taken even the remnant of an army with him.

A Mexican mail was captured by a party of our dragoons on the 22d on its way from the city to Morelia. It contained a multitude of letters dated on the 21st, the day after the great battles, and they gave vivid, and at the same time doleful accounts of their terrible and utter defeat. Some of the writers lay the blame on Santa Anna alone; some on Valencia; some on Santa Anna, Valencia, and all the officers; while others say that Santa Anna, Valencia, and all the officers and soldiers are utterly worthless. The latter writers are more comprehensive, and probably nearer the mark. Many of the letters are exceedingly rich.

One loving husband writes to his wife, whom he calls 'angel,' and 'idol,' and his 'adored Chulita,' and tells her not to occasion herself any uneasiness about his safety, as he does not intend to expose himself! Another officer comes out even plainer. He tells his beloved Rosa that he thought of her when the balls were flying, and ran! The capture of these letters is valuable in more ways than one; they give much information as regards the strength and plans of the enemy, and freely and frankly acknowledge that they have been defeated and utterly disorganized. The number of Santa Anna's grand army is put down at from 30,000 to 35,000, and nearly all of them took a part in the battles of the 20th.

Santa Anna has come out in a long manifesto to the Mexican nation. He begins by saying that he shall speak openly and candidly to his fellow-citizens, as frankness has always been a characteristic of his administration! He next speaks of what he has lately done in the way of collecting an army and munitions for the defence of the capital, and then goes on to lay all the blame of his reverse upon Valencia, who would not obey his orders on the 19th, evacuate Contreras, and fall back upon the second line of defence at Churubusco. He intimates that he continued with his soldiers until the last moment; and after they were routed and driven from Churubusco, he says that he was enabled to rally his troops at the Garita—the third line—and thus save the capital! On the following day, he says, while occupied in reorganizing his forces, strengthening his batteries, and placing himself once more at the head of a column to defend the capital to the last extreme, he received a letter from General Scott proposing an armistice, &c. (Santa Anna says nothing about his talking this matter over the previous evening with Mackintosh and Thornton, and their immediate departure for the American lines, but absolutely harangues his countrymen as tho' the first proposition came from Gen. Scott.) In the concluding paragraphs of his manifesto, Santa Anna says that he has granted an armistice to the Americans, to listen to what their peace commissioner has to say. He gives it as his opinion, that a suspension of hostilities is always beneficial; that war is always an evil—in fact, that perpetual war is an absurdity! He intimates that he has competent authority to listen to overtures of peace; and then he goes on to tell his people that he has a sufficient number of troops to sustain the rights and vindicate the honor of the nation. He considers himself as free as tho' he had obtained a signal victory; and that his fellow-citizens need have no fear of his being deceived or imposed upon by the negotiators of the enemy, inasmuch as he does not dread their men or cannon! If peace can be brought about without losing the honor of the nation, well and good; if not, Santa Anna intimates that he will return to the sword as an arbitrator. Such is a mere outline of a document which makes nearly three columns in the *Diario del Gobierno*.

The commissioners upon the part of the Mexican Government to listen to our overtures of peace are Gens. Moray Villamil and Jose Joaquin de Herrera, the latter formerly President, and now military commandant of Mexico. His character, as all our readers know, is that of an honest but weak man. Don Antonio Garsy, a well-known capitalist, and formerly Minister of Finance, was also appointed on the commission, but refused to serve. He is known to be warmly in favor of peace, probably from interest. The commissioners on the part of Mexico, with Mr. Trist, it is said, are to hold their first meeting this afternoon, at some place near this.

(See 4th page.)