

# THE MEXICAN WAR.

## BATTLES OF CONTRERAS AND CHURUBUSCO.

The following particulars of the late severe battles between the Mexican and American armies, near the City of Mexico, are taken from the letters of Mr. Kendall, editor of the New Orleans Times, who was present at the scenes of conflict.

### THE BATTLE OF CONTRERAS.

At 7 o'clock on the morning of the 15th August, Gen. Worth was in full march for the city of Mexico, by the main road.

About 10 o'clock on the morning of the 16th, the divisions of General Pillow and Taylor, were directed to advance in the direction of Contreras, nearly 14 miles from the city, in plain sight of the enemy's batteries, and within range of their heavier guns. The brigade of Gen. Smith was ordered to advance directly towards the enemy's works, while that of Col. Riley turned towards a small village to the right. At 10 o'clock the brigade of Gen. Caldwell was ordered out to support Col. Riley, while Gen. Pierce's brigade was sent to sustain Gen. Smith.

At about 1 o'clock General Scott arrived, and seeing the immense strength of the Mexicans, he ordered Gen. Smith's brigade from San Antonio to the right, to support Col. Riley, and Gen. Taylor, and prevent, if possible, a junction of the forces coming out from the city with those of General Valencia.

The order of battle of Valencia was certainly most imposing. His army was drawn up to support the batteries, with long lines of the enemy's cavalry were stationed in the rear, as if awaiting the attack of the infantry.

General Scott retired to San Augustin, at 8 o'clock, for the night. The Mexicans were in about 14 miles from the city, in plain sight of the field, in the midst of a perfect rain.

Early on the morning of the 20th, Gen. Worth was ordered to move with a part of his army, General Smith's brigade, and the division of Gen. Taylor, to the attack upon Valencia, for to force this position was deemed indispensable.

A heavy discharge of cannon was heard about 1 o'clock, and in the distance, there had been large masses of Mexicans in full flight towards the city; yet few dreamed that the batteries at Contreras had been stormed and captured. Gen. Worth, started for the scene of action, when he met by Capt. Mason, with the joyful intelligence that Valencia had been completely routed after a short but terrible struggle.

The attack upon his works was planned by General Smith, and resulted in the capture of 35 pieces of artillery, some 1,500 prisoners, among them General Valencia, Garcia, Mendoza, and the notorious Salazar. All the ammunition and camp equipage, with the rest along which those who escaped fled was strewn with muskets. No less than 700 of the enemy, among them some of the best of the army, were taken prisoner, and were undoubtedly for greater. I have no time now to enlarge or comment upon this well-planned and brilliant achievement, but reserving a more detailed description for another time, must pass on to the existing events.

The works at Contreras completely in the power of the American army, Gen. Scott at once ordered Gen. Worth to fall upon the main road, and to turn the capital by the main road, while the main body of the army under Gen. Taylor, Pillow, Smith, Pierce, and Caldwell, moved on towards San Augustin and Colimayán. Scarcely had the advance of Gen. Taylor's corps been announced to the latter village, before a rattling fire of musketry announced that it was actively engaged with the outposts of the enemy, and the movement of cannon gave taken that the noted 24th division had fallen upon another strong work.

But a few minutes more, and a tremendous firing from the right, and division of Gen. Taylor, and the advance of Gen. Taylor, was actively engaged. He had completely turned the strong works of the abandoned place with the loss of their heavy guns, and had fallen back upon his second and stronger line of works. It was now at the commencement of the battle, about one o'clock in the afternoon, and saw the advance of Gen. Taylor's soldiers or never been heard on the continent of America, accompanied with such booming of artillery; and this was continued over two hours and until the enemy was fully routed, and taken prisoners were in full flight for the city.

### THE BATTLE OF CHURUBUSCO.

Let me endeavor in words to give the reader an idea of the position and works of the enemy. As you come along the road leading from San Augustin to the capital, and immediately this side the Puente del Rosas, the Mexicans had thrown up a strong and exceedingly well-built battery, commanding the road completely. On the right of this battery, stretched along the bank of which was a continuous ditch, behind the bank of which a massive number of Mexican infantry were posted. On the left of the battery, or work at the bridge, three hundred yards distant, was the camp of the Mexican army, and also a well-constructed battery containing a number of guns of heavy calibre.

This work was a little advanced from the *levee* of Colimayán, and nearly in a line between it and the village of Colimayán. Further on, on the other side of the work at the bridge, and about three hundred yards from the road, was a large building, which was for the protection of infantry, and in which the enemy had also posted an immense battery. The ground in the vicinity of all these points was completely covered with corn, and other field crops, presenting obstacles insuperable to the advance of our troops. No reconnaissance of the position of the enemy had been made, and consequently our strength could only be ascertained by our blows and losses.

The divisions of Gen. Taylor and Worth were at once engaged, the former with the church and stronghold of Churubusco, and the latter with the batteries at the bridge, and in the meantime Gen. Shields' brigade—the New York and South Carolina volunteers—together with the 9th, 12th and 15th regiments of infantry under Gen. Pierce, were hurrying onward from Colimayán to attack the hacienda. Soon they were engaged, and now the battle became general. The enemy had twenty pieces of cannon, all in admirable position, and served with more than ordinary skill, while but few of our guns could be brought to bear. The battery of Captain Frank Taylor, it is true, opened a well-directed fire upon Churubusco, but so exposed was its situation that it suffered most terribly, both in officers and men.

To describe the force conflict, even now that two days have elapsed, or to give an account of the part taken by the different regiments, were impossible. Mexicans were directly routed and in full flight for the city, was an continuous roar of cannon and musketry, accompanied by the loud shouts of the victors as they rose a dense column of smoke, at times completely shrouding the combatants.

The strength of the enemy at this battle is known to have been 15,000, many say 20,000, and our troops in a position of unequal strength. Opposed to them were about 6,000 Americans, and broken down by marches and counter-marches, and by incessant toil before the strongholds of Contreras and San Antonio. At Churubusco, the Mexicans themselves say, Santa Ana commanded in person, but that he left early. The noted battalions of Hidalgo and Victoria, and of

Independencia—the Polkas, or young men of the capital, from whom so much was expected—were all cut off from their arms.

In a few days, and mostly in the night, the army of Gen. Taylor, nearly 2,000 troops were captured. Among them Gen. Rincon, who commanded in person. Gen. Arzola, late President Substituto, and Gen. Arzola, as well as Col. Gorostiza, formerly minister at Washington. Gen. Garza was captured near San Antonio by Gen. Worth, and several influential officers, among them Col. Mianoran, by Gen. Shields at the hacienda. The most important capture of all was the entire 24th division, mostly made up of deserters from our army, with their commander, the notorious Riley himself. There are all now under close guard, and I trust will be strictly dealt with.

The loss on the side of the Mexicans was heavy. The Spanish Cavalry and N. V. Volunteers, the 6th, 9th, 12th, and Smith's light battalion, attached to Worth's division, and the batteries of Capt. Mason and Taylor, lost 1,200 men, including 272 men who were killed in action. The 1st artillery was also severely engaged.

The Mexican accounts declare the loss, in killed and wounded, to be not less than 12,000 men, among them three presidents and five vice-presidents of Congress. One of our officers says that he has captured more ammunition than he could carry, and that he has seen the capture of the country.

The celebrated Archbishop's Palace of Tepic is now occupied by Gen. Scott, and a portion of the army. After twice defeating the enemy in two of the most important battles of the war, he was quartered here, and he has been purchased at a vast loss of valuable life. We see in the list of the slain names of men at the loss of whom we were—Col. Taylor, Major Miles, six Captains, and five Lieutenants. Four regiments, two Majors, four Captains, and fifty-two Lieutenants, were killed several officers.

The New York regiment of Volunteers had suffered a heavy loss, and was killed and wounded. Two Captains, and seven Lieutenants were killed.

Out of the six thousand Americans engaged in the fight, the loss is believed to be about 14,000 men, and it is believed to be fully equal to our entire loss in killed and wounded, and it is estimated that at least 30,000 prisoners were taken. The number of their wounded is not known, but it is believed to be very large.

When the works of the enemy came to be examined, a person naturally wonders that General Scott's entire force was not swept away. However, since then there were never enough Mexicans to man the works, and there were never enough Mexicans to drive them out.

The greatest loss of the Americans was sustained in the attack upon what Santa Ana called his second line. No reconnaissance of this strong position of the enemy having been made, and the brilliant success of the morning having inspired our troops to the utmost degree of enthusiasm, they rushed pell-mell into the position most exposed, and were mowed down by thousands.

Eighteen heavy pieces of cannon have been captured, and more ammunition than Gen. Scott has ever possessed since he landed in Mexico. The Royal Mail Steamer Britannia arrived at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning in a passage of 13 days from Liverpool, with 168 passengers—17 of her crew, and the adjacent Provinces, and 91 for Boston. Among the latter are Col. Arzola and family, Gen. Armstrong, U.S. Consul at Liverpool, Mr. C. S. Smith, New York Commercial Advertiser, and Mr. P. M. Moore, of Despatches from the U.S. Legation at Paris. The Britannia narrowly escaped a fatal disaster on the coast of New York, and it is believed that she would have been wrecked, had not the accident causing her to leak.

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Trade has been severely prostrated during the last few months, and even at the sacrifice of heavy discount charges, the obtaining of money even on private securities has been next to impossible. The foundation, however, on which we rest is not so much improved. The harvest, on which so much confidence was placed, is now in a state of safety and abundance, beyond a doubt. The condition of France, too, in respect to it, is at least for some time to come, no reasonable doubt that that fact will be both plentiful and cheap.

We are glad to be able to state that the draft of Mr. Vard and Co. of New York, on Overend and Co., which have remained unaccepted for some days past, are now in order. We are informed that they have already had two meetings, and were to have a third, and perhaps a last interview, on Monday, the 30th August. It would be idle for us to speculate on the ultimate result.

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the recent accounts that Gen. Valencia was opposed to the armistice, that he had escaped from the city, and was now on his way to the States. The probability of his joining Paredes, and giving our army a great deal of trouble in the rear. The division existing between these leaders, will be the most serious obstacle to the establishment of peace, or to the renunciation of any treaty we may form with the party in power. Until we can reconcile these differences, we had better abandon all idea of any immediate settlement of the question.

We have no means of judging what the probability of the armistice will be. While it lasts, every effort will be made, without doubt, by our government, to concentrate as near the capital as the terms of the armistice will permit, as large a force as possible, so as to be prepared for any emergency. We have very little doubt that the first opportunity will be taken to take our army is now in the very centre of the enemy's country, and our leaders must be wary, or they will be humiliated in the most important question that will still be before us.

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THE NEWS FROM MEXICO.—We should judge from the number of officers, particularly among the volunteers, killed and wounded, that our loss in rank and file was very heavy. The accounts of the various engagements since the commencement of the war.

The most natural questions that suggest themselves in perusing the accounts from the seat of war, are, the prospect of a peace any brighter? Is there any greater probability of hostilities being brought to a close? It is our opinion, so far as we can judge by the accounts received, so far as an amicable adjustment of the difficulties between the two governments, is as far distant as ever; that the capture of the city of Mexico will not lead to those results which many have anticipated. It appears by

the recent accounts that Gen. Valencia was opposed to the armistice, that he had escaped from the city, and was now on his way to the States. The probability of his joining Paredes, and giving our army a great deal of trouble in the rear. The division existing between these leaders, will be the most serious obstacle to the establishment of peace, or to the renunciation of any treaty we may form with the party in power. Until we can reconcile these differences, we had better abandon all idea of any immediate settlement of the question.

We have no means of judging what the probability of the armistice will be. While it lasts, every effort will be made, without doubt, by our government, to concentrate as near the capital as the terms of the armistice will permit, as large a force as possible, so as to be prepared for any emergency. We have very little doubt that the first opportunity will be taken to take our army is now in the very centre of the enemy's country, and our leaders must be wary, or they will be humiliated in the most important question that will still be before us.

A few days will still be before us, and the negotiations going on at the last accounts, fall there will be no alternative left, but to keep our army in the very centre of the whole country.—*New York Herald*.

LATE FROM YUCATAN.—The brig Globe, arrived at this port from Sisal, brings dates to 25th inst. We have received a full confirmation of the report from Yucatan of the rebellion among the Indians. In several villages, the rebels have been successful, and the main road from Sisal to Merida was guarded with heavy cannon, to prevent an attack upon the whites at Sisal. About two hundred Indians had been taken prisoner, and were now at Merida.—*N. Y. Herald*.

## The Observer.

SAINT JOHN, SEPTEMBER 21, 1847.

FIRST SEPTEMBER MAIL.—The steamship Britannia, Capt. Harrison, with the first September mail, 191 days from Liverpool, arrived at Halifax on Friday morning last. An express, bringing the letter bags only, arrived here on Sunday morning, the bags containing the newspapers having been omitted; they arrived yesterday afternoon, with the regular mail from Halifax.

Miss Peters, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Morrison, and Mr. W. Morrison, of this City, were among the passengers in the Britannia, and the friends of the United Kingdom had been splendid for gathering in the evening, and the price of flour and grain had further declined.

HALIFAX, September 18.—ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST SEPTEMBER PACKET.—A PORTMOUTH LETTER FROM ENGLAND.—The Royal Mail Steamer Britannia arrived at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning in a passage of 13 days from Liverpool, with 168 passengers—17 of her crew, and the adjacent Provinces, and 91 for Boston. Among the latter are Col. Arzola and family, Gen. Armstrong, U.S. Consul at Liverpool, Mr. C. S. Smith, New York Commercial Advertiser, and Mr. P. M. Moore, of Despatches from the U.S. Legation at Paris. The Britannia narrowly escaped a fatal disaster on the coast of New York, and it is believed that she would have been wrecked, had not the accident causing her to leak.

We have London dates to the 3d, and Liverpool to the 14th, by the latter.

Some very heavy failures are occurring among the merchants in the principal cities of the United Kingdom, but the Bank of England, notwithstanding, has resolved upon reducing the rate of interest, and the Corn market, amounting to about 13s per quarter, on Wheat, to 45s per barrel, and the rate on Indian Corn to 10s per bushel, and it is not credit seems to be attached to them.

In Colonial Timber, the demand continued limited, and without any advance in prices. Her Majesty and suite were still engaged in the city of New York, and the departure of the Steamer Sarah Sands arrived at Liverpool on the 24th inst., and she sailed again for New York on the 3d inst.

That wonder