

greatly underestimated the numbers necessary to be enlisted in order to keep up a given effective force at the front.

"The toils and hardships of the first campaign," wrote Major I. I. Stevens shortly after the close of the war, "without including casualties in battle, will, in a distant and untried theatre, reduce the effective force of regulars to three-fourths or four-fifths, and of volunteers to one-half or two-thirds of the original number. To have insured a column of 10,000 effectives in advance of Monterey, and one of 20,000 throughout the Vera Cruz campaign, estimating the force to keep open the northern line at 3000 men, required an additional force of 10,000 volunteers and 12,000 regulars."

But at the time Cerro Gordo was fought only about eight thousand volunteers and eight thousand five hundred regulars had been even called out. Moreover, the time required to enlist, clothe, arm, equip, and drill these men, and then transport them fifteen hundred or two thousand miles to join the army, was also greatly underestimated; and it is not surprising that with the best will in the world Scott's reinforcements fell far short of the number that had been regarded as necessary for the campaign, and that they reached him much later than he had expected.

"The consequence," to quote again from Major Stevens, "was that the shock of battle had to be borne by half the numbers originally contemplated. Great risk of disaster was incurred on both lines (Taylor's and Scott's). Impossibilities almost were attempted, and impossibilities almost were performed."¹

Scott foolishly accused the government, and particularly Marcy, of trying to "destroy" him by wilfully withholding both men and supplies, a charge which the Secretary of War had no difficulty in refuting in a long and angry correspondence which later ensued.² Whatever else may be said of Marcy, he certainly was not a fool; and none but a fool in his position would have endeavored to injure the reputation of a general by deliberately weakening his army. To "destroy" Scott by causing the loss of battles would have been the surest way of destroying the administration.

¹ Stevens, 37.

² H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1218-1251.

The War Department was not effectively organized to undertake the sudden mobilization of large bodies of troops in a distant campaign. The wonder is not that so many delays and disappointments occurred, but that so much was accomplished by an inadequate and inexperienced general staff. Certainly Scott was the last man who should have criticised the failures that occurred. He had been for years a part of the mechanism of the War Department, and must have known, as well as any one, its weakness under the strain of sudden emergencies. For more than fourteen months before war was actually declared it was evident to every observer that war was highly probable, but Scott made no plans, collected no information, and did nothing to prepare for the coming strain upon the head-quarters organization of the army. The circumstance that the army under his immediate command in June, 1847, was inadequate in numbers and lacking in supplies was not the fault of any individual, and still less was it due to any deliberate act of Polk's administration; but it was the inevitable result of congressional delays in authorizing enlistments, added to thirty years of indifference and neglect on the part of successive Congresses and administrations, and commanding officers and heads of bureaus.

But in spite of his loudly proclaimed weakness Scott now took the very doubtful step of sending back to Vera Cruz such of the twelve months' volunteers as were not willing to re-enlist, inasmuch as their terms of service would expire within the following six weeks. The subject, he wrote, had given him long and deep solicitude.

"To part with so large and so respectable a portion of the army, in the middle of a country, which, though broken in its power, is not yet disposed to sue for peace; to provide for the return home of the seven regiments from this interior position, at a time when I find it quite difficult to provide transportation and supplies for the operating forces which remain; and all this without any prospect of succor or reinforcement, in perhaps the next seven months, beyond some three hundred army recruits, present novelties utterly unknown to any invading army before.

"With the addition of ten or twelve thousand new levies, in April and May, asked for, and until very recently expected, or even with the addition of the two or three thousand new troops destined for this army, but suddenly, by the orders of the War Department, diverted, to the Rio Grande frontier, I might, notwithstanding the unavoidable discharge of the old volunteers, seven regiments and two independent companies, advance with confidence upon the enemy's capital. I shall, nevertheless, advance, but whether beyond Puebla will depend on intervening information and reflection. The general panic given to the enemy at Cerro Gordo still remaining, I think it probable that we shall go to Mexico; or if the enemy recover from that we must renew the consternation by another blow. Puebla, it is known, does not hope to resist our progress, but stands ready to receive us amicably, or at least courteously. Our difficulties lie in gathering in subsistence from a country covered with exasperated guerillas and banditti, and, maintaining, with inadequate garrisons and escorts, communications with the rear."¹

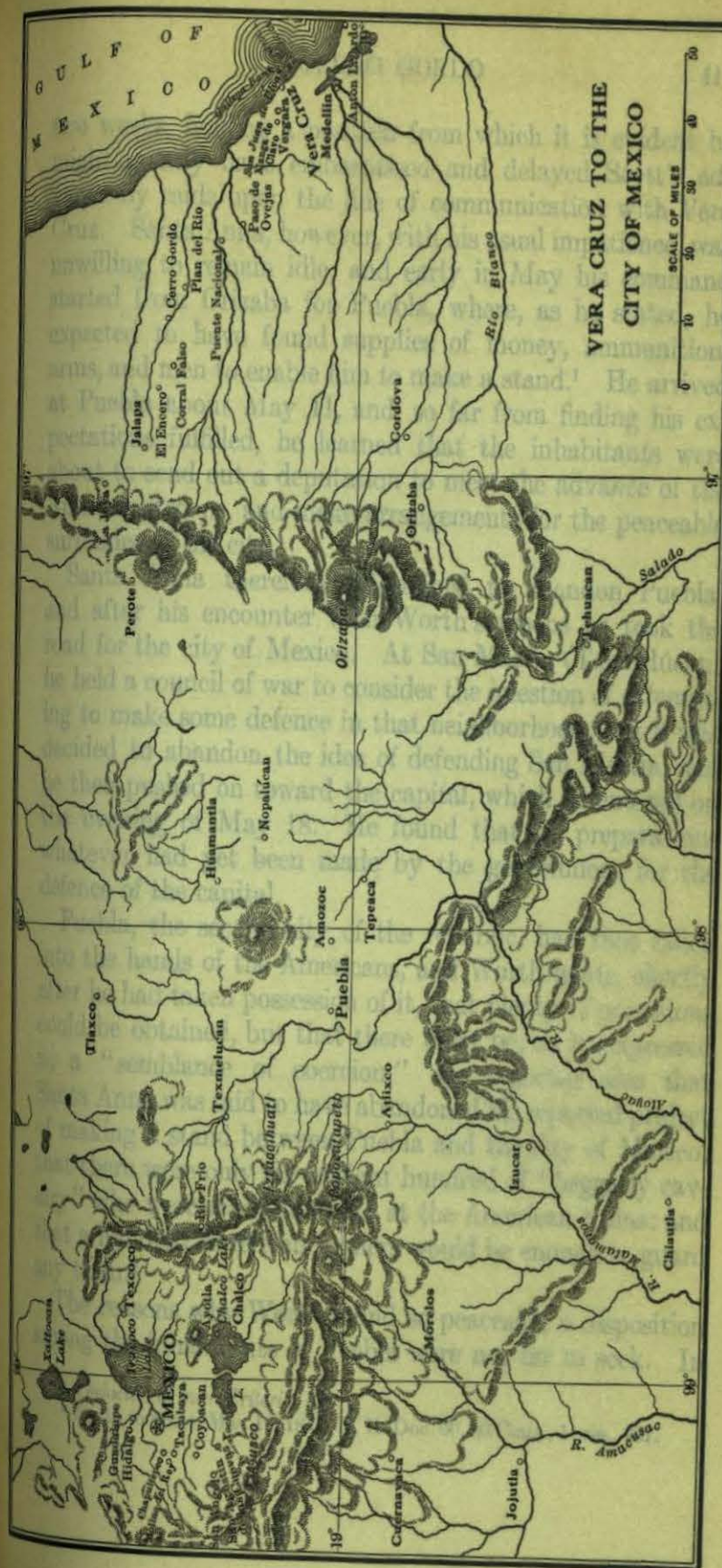
Nine days after this letter was written Worth took possession of Puebla after a skirmish near the village of Amozoc with a body of cavalry which he estimated at from two thousand to three thousand strong. Upon the appearance of this force, Worth halted and sent two batteries of field artillery in the direction of the Mexican cavalry.

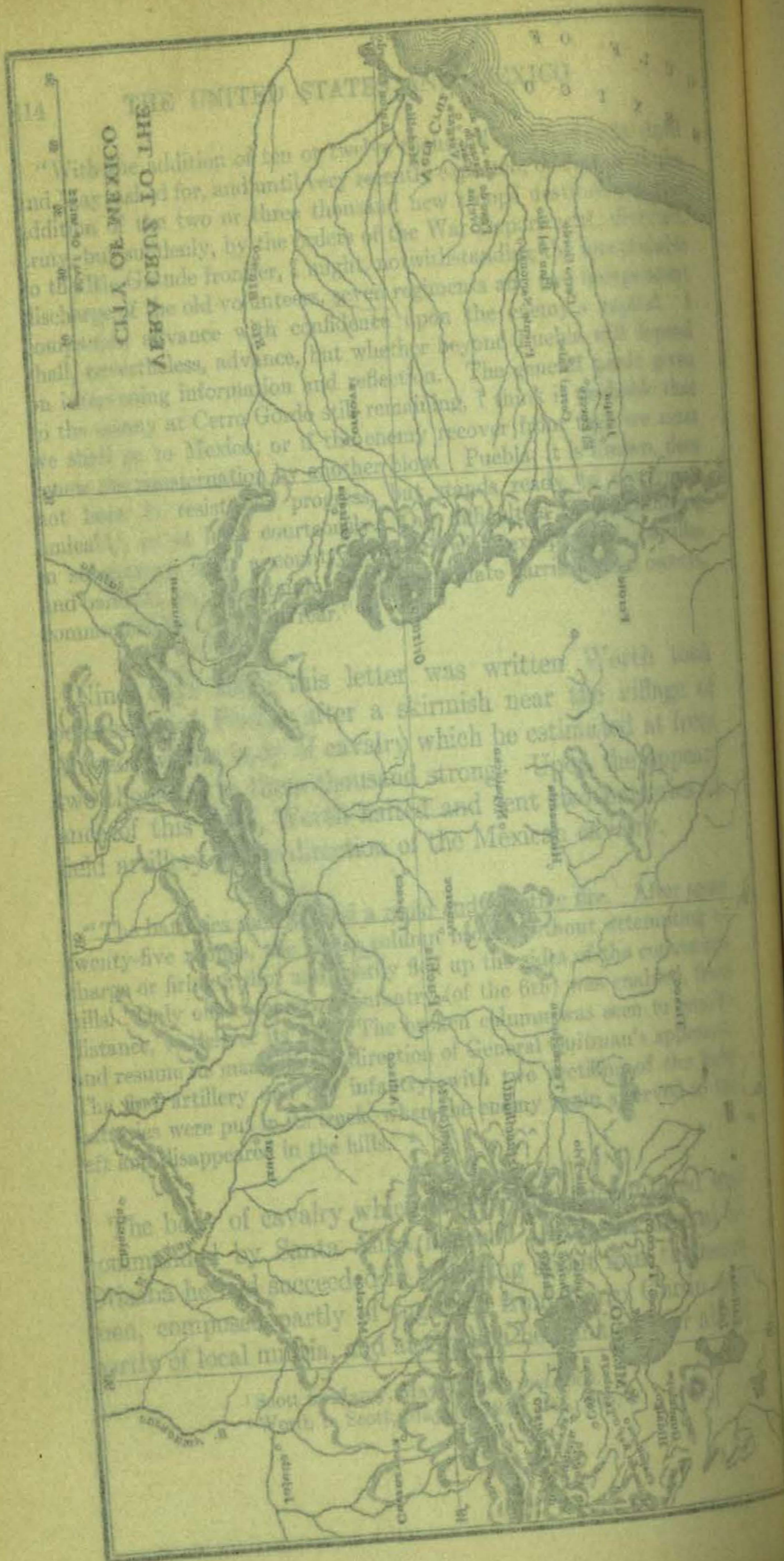
"The batteries soon opened a rapid and effective fire. After some twenty-five rounds, the entire column broke, without attempting to charge or firing a shot and hastily fled up the sides of the convenient hills. Only one company of infantry (of the 6th) was enabled, from distance, to deliver its fire. The broken column was seen to reunite and resume its march in the direction of General Quitman's approach. The 2nd artillery and 8th infantry, with two sections of the light batteries were put in its track, when the enemy again swerved to the left and disappeared in the hills."²

The body of cavalry which Worth thus encountered was commanded by Santa Anna himself. After his arrival at Orizaba he had succeeded in collecting about four thousand men, composed partly of fugitives from Cerro Gordo and partly of local militia, and at Orizaba he remained for about

¹ Scott to Marcy, May 6, 1847; *ibid.*, 954.

² Worth to Scott, May 15, 1847; *ibid.*, 995.





two weeks, holding a position from which it is evident he might greatly have embarrassed and delayed Scott's advance by raids upon the line of communication with Vera Cruz. Santa Anna, however, with his usual impatience, was unwilling to remain idle, and early in May his command started from Orizaba for Puebla, where, as he stated, he expected to have found supplies of money, ammunition, arms, and men to enable him to make a stand.¹ He arrived at Puebla about May 11, and, so far from finding his expectations fulfilled, he learned that the inhabitants were about to send out a deputation to meet the advance of the American troops, and make arrangements for the peaceable surrender of the city.

Santa Anna therefore determined to abandon Puebla, and after his encounter with Worth's troops he took the road for the city of Mexico. At San Martin (Texmelucan) he held a council of war to consider the question of attempting to make some defence in that neighborhood; but it was decided to abandon the idea of defending San Martin, and he then pushed on toward the capital, which he entered on the evening of May 18. He found that no preparations whatever had yet been made by the government for the defence of the capital.

Puebla, the second city of the republic, had thus fallen into the hands of the Americans, and Worth wrote, shortly after he had taken possession of it, that plenty of provisions could be obtained, but that there must be, as he expressed it, a "semblance of coercion." He reported also that Santa Anna was said to have abandoned his reported project of making a stand between Puebla and the city of Mexico; that there were only six or eight hundred of "beggarly cavalry" who were ready to strike at the American trains; and that a hundred American soldiers would be enough to guard any train.²

The reasons why Worth found so peaceable a disposition among the inhabitants of Puebla were not far to seek. In

¹ *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 42.

² Worth to Scott, May 19, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 967.

the first place, Scott had published a manifesto at Jalapa on May 11, 1847, which set forth, with practical good sense and in benevolent and conciliatory language, the shortcomings of the Mexican government and the pacific desires and intentions of the American troops. According to a Mexican historian this paper had much to do with the willingness to surrender.¹ But the fact was that no proclamation would have produced any effect upon the people of the city if the majority of the citizens had not been already disposed to accept anything that looked like peace and a stable government. Disorder, amounting at times to anarchy, and almost uninterrupted warfare for so many years, had discouraged the entire population. They longed for individual and public security, and for an opportunity to enjoy the advantages of civil liberty. The great mass of the people—the plundered farmers and merchants and artisans, and the poor and isolated Indians who were unwillingly forced into the armies of Mexico, and who considered the whole white or mixed race as usurpers of their territory—had no desire for war. Nearly forty years of civil strife had been enough. And the striking contrast between the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of Vera Cruz and Jalapa under control of American officers, who ruled firmly but paid in cash, and the demands which the Mexican government was continually making for new sacrifices from the people, coupled with threats of fresh violence, were bound to be favorable to the invaders.²

Scott at any rate had no hesitation in riding through the country ahead of his army; and with a small escort, number-

¹ Worth wrote from Puebla (in the letter mentioned in the foregoing note) that the proclamation "takes admirably, and has produced more decided effects than all the blows from Palo Alto to Cerro Gordo." Whether it produced as good an effect with the members of the governing class in the capital may be doubted.

² Roa Bárcena, 278. Worth, however, did not have all plain sailing. An account of his entry into the city and of minor controversies with the ayuntamiento will be found in a small anonymous pamphlet entitled *Relación de los Sucesos acaecidos en la Ciudad de Puebla del 14 al 27 de Mayo de 1847*. One dispute arose from his insisting on trying by court-martial some men accused of murdering one soldier and wounding another in a suburb of the city (pp. 13, 21, etc.)

ing only about two hundred and fifty men, he joined Worth at Puebla on the twenty-eighth of May, Twiggs following shortly after. Upon the arrival of this division, Scott had in Puebla 5,280 effectives (non-commissioned officers and privates), or something over fifty-five hundred in all—a force evidently too small to garrison that city and also to march upon the capital. But Scott hoped to be so reinforced in two or three weeks as to be enabled to advance, and he ordered up to Puebla almost all of the troops who had not been directed to return to the United States. Jalapa was abandoned, and the sick and wounded at that point were either left in the care of the local civil authorities—who faithfully discharged their trust—or were put in charge of the small American garrison in the castle of Perote.¹

¹ Scott to Childs, June 3, 1847; Scott to Marcy, June 4, 1847; H. R. Doc. 60, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 993, 997. Scott's letter to Marcy was the last received from him at the War Department until the twelfth of November following.