

was attacking the Casa Mata. But in truth the Mexican cavalry was worthless. At Palo Alto, at Monterey, and at Buena Vista, as well as during Scott's march from Puebla to Ayotla and his march from Ayotla to San Agustin, they had never shown the slightest dash or enterprise; and their conduct on the day of the Molino del Rey was no worse than it had been throughout the whole war.

Santa Anna himself was criticised for weakening the centre of his line on the night before Worth's attack, and for not leaving any subordinate in general command of the position. Pérez in the Casa Mata, Ramírez in the centre, Leon in the Molino del Rey, and Alvarez on the extreme right, all held independent commands, and, in Santa Anna's absence, had no common superior. Of the American generals, Worth was blamed for the bloody assault on the Casa Mata without a sufficient preparation by artillery fire; and indeed that attack seems to have been needless in view both of Worth's instructions and his plan of piercing the Mexican centre. If Clarke's brigade had been simply used to contain the Mexican right, their mere presence would have prevented the infantry in the Casa Mata from reinforcing the Mexican left; and when the centre was pierced, and the Molino del Rey was taken, the Casa Mata would undoubtedly have been abandoned or shelled into surrender with little loss.

As to Scott, it is plain that he blundered badly in ordering the attack. "He had originated it in error and caused it to be fought with inadequate forces, for an object which had no existence."¹ Even more truly than of Churubusco, it might be said of the combat of September 8 that a few more such victories would be the destruction of his army. If he gained prestige and thus demoralized his enemy, it is certain that he gained nothing else.

The affair of Molino del Rey being concluded, Scott was able to turn his whole attention to reconnoissances of the city and to the development of a plan of attack. The ques-

¹ Semmes, 444.

tion to be decided was whether Chapultepec should first be taken, or whether Chapultepec might be left to take care of itself while an attempt was made to carry the works on the south side of the city. Upon this point opinions in the American army were much divided.

On the south side there were two causeways across the marshes, each running due north, and each entering at *garitas*, or gates, some distance from the built-up portion of the city. The easternmost of these two roads was the Acapulco highway, coming in the city from San Agustin, through the ranch of San Antonio and over the bridge of Churubusco, to the gate of San Antonio Abad. The westernmost was the road running from Contreras through San Angel to the Niño Perdido gate. A cross-road from Tacubaya, running easterly through the little village of Piedad, crossed both the Niño Perdido and San Antonio roads. From Piedad itself a third road also ran due north to the gate of Belén at the southwesterly corner of the city, where it met a causeway running directly from Chapultepec. Near the Belén gate was the old Spanish citadel, a square work of no great strength, with small bastions at each corner, surrounding an arsenal and barracks. It mounted in all fifteen guns.

North of the Belén gate, and near the northwesterly part of the city, was the gate of San Cosmé, reached by a road known as the Calzada de San Cosmé which ran nearly east and west. It was the causeway along which Cortés retreated upon the *noche triste*. About a thousand yards—a little more than half a mile—from this gate, the San Cosmé road was joined by a road running northerly from Tacubaya past Chapultepec, known as the Calzada de la Verónica. It was generally agreed that it would be impossible to attack the gates of Belén or San Cosmé unless Chapultepec were first taken.

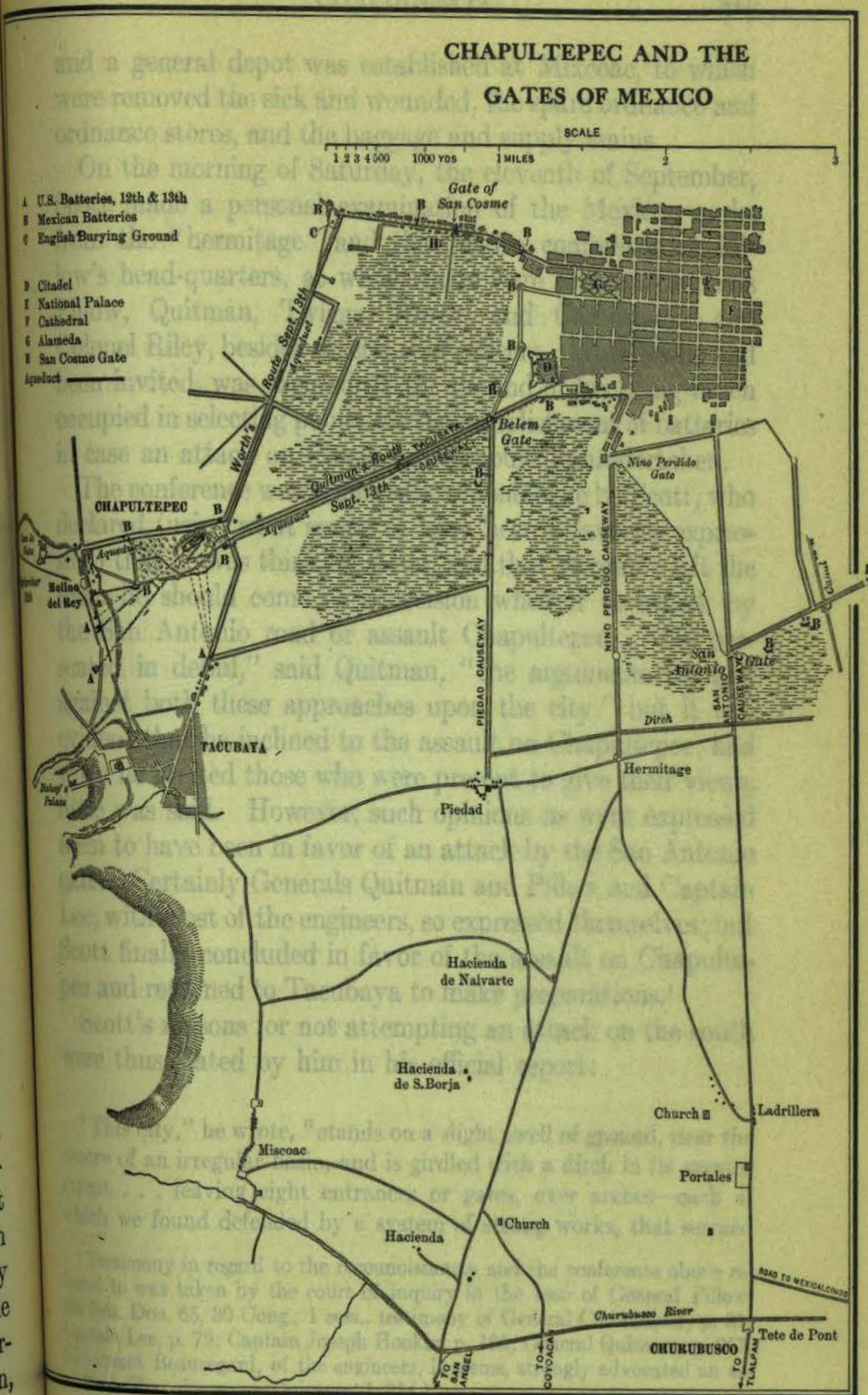
The city of Mexico was in no sense a fortified place. There were no walls about it. The so-called gates were mere stations intended to be occupied by detachments of police or revenue officers; but as they were generally solid stone

buildings they could be made to serve for purposes of defence; and at most of them barricades and earthworks, mounting only a few light guns, had been hastily constructed. But the strength of these posts lay chiefly in the fact that they could only be approached in front by perfectly straight causeways running through marshy fields and flanked by broad ditches.

Early on the morning of Thursday, the ninth of September, there appeared to be some activity on the Mexican side, and Riley's brigade of Twiggs's division was sent, in consequence, to occupy the village of Piedad; and soon afterward the whole of Pillow's division was sent to join Riley, while a party of infantry was sent easterly along the cross-road to seize an adobe house—said to be a ruined hermitage—which stood at the angle of that road and the road leading north to the Niño Perdido gate. The house had been occupied the night before by an advanced picket of the Mexicans. From this post, which afforded a clear view of the city across the marshes, reconnoissances, begun on the seventh and eighth, were continued on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of September.

While the Americans were thus busy in examining their enemy's position, the Mexicans were seen to be throwing up a long line of intrenchments from the garita of the Niño Perdido to that of San Antonio, and in putting several pieces of artillery in position. On the Saturday evening there were at least eleven guns in position in these batteries, and, the neighboring Viga canal having been cut, many of the low-lying fields were flooded—the ditches, of course, being everywhere brimful.

Scott, however, was not even yet ready to attack, and his orders to Pillow, who was in command at the village of Piedad, were to watch the enemy's movements, but to attempt nothing offensive. Pillow, however, caused the American picket at the "hermitage" to be reinforced by both infantry and artillery, and the road from thence to the garita of the Niño Perdido to be repaired. At the same time Scott ordered up Quitman's division from San Agustin to Coyoacan,



and a general depot was established at Mixcoac, to which were removed the sick and wounded, the spare ordnance and ordnance stores, and the baggage and supply trains.

On the morning of Saturday, the eleventh of September, Scott made a personal examination of the Mexican works from the "hermitage" and then had a conference at Pillow's head-quarters, at which there were present Generals Pillow, Quitman, Twiggs, Pierce, and Cadwalader and Colonel Riley, besides several staff-officers. Worth, who had been invited, was excused on the ground of his being much occupied in selecting points for the establishment of batteries in case an attack on Chapultepec should be undertaken.

The conference was principally a monologue by Scott, who declared (using what seems to have been a favorite expression) that he was thinking aloud, and that before he left the room he should come to a decision whether to attack by the San Antonio road or assault Chapultepec. "He presented in detail," said Quitman, "the arguments for and against both these approaches upon the city," but it was evident that he inclined to the assault on Chapultepec; and when he invited those who were present to give their views, little was said. However, such opinions as were expressed seem to have been in favor of an attack by the San Antonio gate. Certainly Generals Quitman and Pillow and Captain Lee, with most of the engineers, so expressed themselves; but Scott finally concluded in favor of the assault on Chapultepec and returned to Tacubaya to make preparations.¹

Scott's reasons for not attempting an attack on the south were thus stated by him in his official report:

"This city," he wrote, "stands on a slight swell of ground, near the centre of an irregular basin, and is girdled with a ditch in its greater extent . . . leaving eight entrances or gates, over arches—each of which we found defended by a system of strong works, that seemed

¹ Testimony in regard to the reconnoissances and the conference above referred to was taken by the court of inquiry in the case of General Pillow. See Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., testimony of General Cadwalader, p. 81; Captain Lee, p. 79; Captain Joseph Hooker, p. 168; General Quitman, p. 257. Lieutenant Beauregard, of the engineers, it seems, strongly advocated an assault on Chapultepec.—(Quitman, I, 354.)

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 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 checkered, are, moreover, in many spots, under water or marshy. . . .

"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 that net-work of obstacles, and to seek, by a sudden inversion to the southwest and west, less unfavorable 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."¹

Scott's plan, therefore, contemplated a feigned attack by Twiggs's division on the garita of San Antonio, a prolonged cannonade of the palace of Chapultepec, and an assault by Quitman's and Pillow's divisions, with Worth in support. Whether he had made any plan for the movements of the army after they had taken Chapultepec is not clear. Pillow asked him that direct question, but seems to have got no answer; although Scott is reported to have said in the same conversation that he had reason to believe he would be met by a white flag on taking the palace.²

However, in accordance with the plan above outlined, two heavy batteries were constructed on the night of Saturday, the eleventh of September—the first on the road leading from Tacubaya past Chapultepec to the San Cosmé road, the second on the road leading from Tacubaya to Molino del Rey. The first of these was distant about a thousand yards from the southern face of the palace, the second about fifteen hundred yards from the southwesterly angle—which were long ranges for the artillery of that day.

¹ Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 376.

² Testimony of Cadwalader and Hooker; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 81, 169.

Quitman was ordered to march with his whole division by daylight on Saturday to join Pillow at Piedad, where more than half of Scott's army was now assembled. But late at night all the troops (except Twiggs's division) were put in motion. Pillow's division marched to the battle-field of Molino del Rey with orders to seize the buildings at dawn on Sunday, while Quitman was ordered to take position near the southerly wall of the Chapultepec enclosure and support the batteries that had been erected during the night. By three o'clock on Sunday morning Pillow was in position and seized the mill as directed, and at the same time occupied the Casa Mata. A third battery was then established, close to the Molino del Rey and at a distance of about eleven hundred yards from the westerly end of the palace of Chapultepec. This last battery was not completed until the afternoon; but the two batteries first constructed opened early in the morning, and the bombardment was kept up all day, inflicting some damage to the palace, but much more to the *morale* of its defenders.

The palace, as has been seen, was not in any proper sense a "castle," or a "fortress," as the American reports called it, but a large and solidly built dwelling whose commanding position on the summit of a ridge afforded excellent opportunities for a vigorous defence; while some improvised works in and near it, mounted with a few pieces of light artillery, had given it a certain degree of added strength.

The post was commanded at this time by the veteran General Bravo, whose experience in warfare, and particularly in the revolutionary struggles of thirty years before, had been rather those of a guerilla chief than a commander of regular troops. According to his own reports, his force was so diminished by desertion that on Sunday evening there remained under his command only 832 men, being one battalion of infantry of the line and various detachments of national guards, chiefly the remains of those who had garrisoned the Molino del Rey on the previous Wednesday. Of these, 367 were posted in the grove and other points within the enclosure, and the rest within the palace itself. There

must also be added the students of the Military College, whom Bravo did not include; and in addition there were large forces in the neighborhood, but outside the enclosure, who were not under his command.

Within the enclosure and at its western end the ground near the Molino del Rey was a level, open, cultivated field with a ditch at the end of the field toward the palace. Some slight intrenchments had been constructed along or near the ditch. Beyond these began the cypress grove, the ground continuing level and very marshy for another five hundred yards, when the rocky ascent began. On this western slope, not quite half-way up, was a small redan, a breastwork for infantry only, in the rear of which the ground had been mined. At the foot of the western parapet of the terrace of the palace was a ditch about twelve feet wide and ten deep.

At the palace itself thirteen pieces of artillery of various calibres had been mounted on the terraces, two of which were in a projection on the northern side, giving a flank fire toward the Molino del Rey and along the road north of the enclosure; while the remaining guns commanded the western and southern approaches, which alone were practicable for an assaulting party. The palace buildings had been strengthened by hastily constructed splinter-proofs of timber and sand-bags, and the roof was protected in like manner. The roadway leading to the palace on the south front had been strengthened by an earthen parapet on its outer side all the way up; and at the angle of the zigzag, where the road turned, a four-pounder gun had been placed and a breastwork for infantry had been constructed.

Outside of the enclosure, near its southeastern angle, strong barricades had been built across the Tacubaya road, and in their rear and in the field to the west was a lunette with wet ditches. The barricades and lunette together mounted three guns, which commanded the road and the fields on either side of it. In the rear of these works, the park walls of the enclosure had been furnished with scaffolding along the inner side, so as to form a banquettes for infantry.

During Sunday, while the bombardment of Chapultepec was going on, both Generals Quitman and Pillow had opportunities to reconnoitre the ground in their front over which the assault was to be made; but apart from their reconnoissances no effort was made on that day to push forward the American infantry. The Mexicans, meanwhile, were busy bringing up reinforcements from the city. Early that morning Santa Anna had been informed that the greater part of Scott's troops had been collected near Tacubaya, and he accordingly ordered all the available Mexican forces into that neighborhood, leaving, as he stated, strong reserves near the San Antonio gate. These available forces consisted principally of the brigades of Rangel and Ramírez (now under General Peña y Barragan), which as yet had taken little active part in the battles near the capital.

During the day Bravo repeatedly called for reinforcements, and Santa Anna sent the battalion of San Blas, under Colonel Xicotencatl, whose name suggests Tlascalan descent;¹ but toward nightfall this battalion was withdrawn from the grove in which it had been posted, and Santa Anna after dark verbally directed Bravo to withdraw all his troops to the palace itself. Bravo, however, remonstrated against this step, and finally convinced Santa Anna that the grove ought to be firmly held; and the latter promised to send a battalion that night, with other reinforcements at the opportune moment. He explained that he was unwilling to send more men at that time, as it was an unnecessary exposure during the bombardment, but that aid would be forthcoming when the time came.

Bravo protested that a defence was impossible with the troops he had; that the battalion of Toluca had deserted almost in a body; and that the remainder were completely demoralized by the bombardment.

"I answered," said Santa Anna, "that the contagion of fear (*mal de espanto*) had also spread to those who were at the foot of the rock, and as all the troops were of the same quality I must be excused for

¹ See Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, I, 420.

not making the exchange he proposed; but that in the morning, if the enemy attacked, I would reinforce him in ample time (*con oportunidad*)."

And Santa Anna repeatedly expressed the opinion that the adding of men to the garrison of Chapultepec, so long as the bombardment was in progress, would merely result in a useless sacrifice of life, and that Bravo, with a thousand men, would have enough.¹ The San Blas battalion was sent back to the grove before the assault began the next morning; and at that time Bravo should have had eight hundred and thirty-two of the regular garrison, besides the students of the *Colegio Militar* and four hundred men of San Blas, making about thirteen hundred muskets in all. But there were probably some desertions during that night.

At about the time that Bravo and Santa Anna were thus conferring on Sunday evening, Scott summoned Generals Pillow, Quitman, and Worth for a conference at his headquarters in Tacubaya, at which they were to receive final instructions for the assault. Scott, at one time on Sunday, had thought of ordering an attack that night; but Lee, Beauregard, and Tower, who had made reconnoissances of the works during the afternoon, persuaded him it would be better to wait till morning, "to which he readily assented, as he appeared to be more in favor of the morning attack."² When, therefore, the three generals arrived a little later, Scott began by stating that it would be necessary to carry Chapultepec by storm the next morning, and some general conversation ensued.

"After a good many remarks and suggestions," said Quitman, "connected with the details of the expected movement . . . the conclusion of General Scott's instructions to me, to the best of my recollection, was that General Pillow should advance to his attack from his position on the west of Chapultepec to the assault of the fortress, while my division, for the support of which General Smith's brigade had been ordered to report to me, was ordered to advance simultaneously to the assault of the fortress, by the Tacubaya road; General

¹ *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 113.

² Testimony of Captain Lee; Sen. Doc. 65, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 144.

Scott instructing both General Pillow and myself to move from our position to the assault at the signal, which he informed us would be the cessation of the firing of the heavy batteries, and particularly directing us to make the attack, as near as possible, simultaneous. A part of his plan and instructions was, that the batteries under the direction of General Pillow and myself should commence, at as early an hour as possible, an active cannonade upon the fortress, when the firing of the batteries would be stopped by his order, as a signal to advance to the assault."

It was also explained that General Twiggs would be directed to renew the feigned attack on the San Antonio gate with Riley's brigade, while the bombardment of Chapultepec would be continued "to make the enemy believe that we were repeating the game, or attack, played that day."¹

In further preparation for the assault, Scott had directed that storming parties, each numbering two hundred and fifty men, should be organized from the two regular divisions of the army. The party from Worth's was to report to Pillow, and that from Twiggs's division was to report to Quitman. Scaling-ladders, pickaxes, and crow-bars had been previously collected by Worth, and were ordered distributed equally between Pillow's and Quitman's columns. Worth was ordered to hold his division in reserve, near the Molino del Rey.

In exact accordance with these carefully prepared plans, the American batteries again opened at daylight on Monday morning both on Chapultepec and on the lines near the San Antonio gate, and the final dispositions were made for the infantry assault. By about eight o'clock Scott, "judging that the time had arrived, by the effect of the missiles we had thrown," gave the concerted signal, and both columns advanced with alacrity.

Pillow's advance was made in three detachments. The first, consisting of one battalion of the "voltigeurs" (the tenth United States infantry) and the storming party from Worth's division, moved forward on the outside of the southern park wall; the second, consisting of three regiments of

¹ Testimony of General Quitman, Captain Lee, and General Worth; *ibid.*, 268, 144, 193.