

CHAPTER XLVIII  
THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF MEXICO—FINAL  
MILITARY OPERATIONS

GENERAL SCOTT had given no orders as to what was to be done after Chapultepec was taken; but, without instructions, a pursuit of the defeated and disorganized Mexicans had been begun and was being hotly pressed by the time Scott himself had reached the palace and looked down on the meadows and causeways at his feet. Worth, pushing back the defenders along the northerly park wall, had turned north on the Calzada de la Verónica with all the force under his command; and Smith's brigade, forming temporarily a part of Quitman's command, had turned east on the Calzada de Belén. Each had advanced several hundred yards by the time Scott was able to get a clear view of the field of operations.

"Deeming it all-important," he reported, "to profit by our successes, and the consequent dismay of the enemy, which could not be otherwise than general, I hastened to despatch, from Chapultepec—first Clarke's brigade and then Cadwalader's, to the support of Worth, and gave orders that the necessary heavy guns should follow. Pierce's brigade was, at the same time sent to Quitman, and in the course of the afternoon, I caused some additional siege pieces to be added to the train. Then, after designating the 15th infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Howard—Morgan, the colonel, had been disabled by a wound at Churubusco—as the garrison of Chapultepec, and giving directions for the care of the prisoners of war, the captured ordnance and ordnance stores, I proceeded to join the advance of Worth."<sup>1</sup>

The causeways by which Worth and Quitman's commands respectively advanced were wide and solid structures,

<sup>1</sup> Scott's Report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 381.

ures, well elevated above the level of the marshes they traversed. Down the middle of each ran an aqueduct, the city's water supply, which rested upon open arches and massive pillars of masonry, and afforded, said Scott, "fine points both for attack and defence." The arches were perhaps of four or five feet span, and the columns four feet thick; so that, while affording some cover, the arches could not shelter many men at one time. It is also to be noted that vehicles on one roadway could not generally turn off onto the other. There were, however, certain places at which wider arched openings had been provided for this purpose.

Worth, pushing along northerly with his artillery on the westerly roadway of the Calzada de la Verónica, found one such turnout about twelve hundred yards from the northeast corner of the Chapultepec enclosure. Here he halted, crossed over Duncan's battery to the easterly side of the aqueduct, and sent it, with the light battalion in support, along a road that branched off toward the east. This branch road ran only as far as a point known as the Hacienda de la Teja; but from there Duncan was able to shell a battery on the Calzada de Belén, which was endeavoring to check Quitman's advance.

While halted at this point,<sup>1</sup> Worth was overtaken by three squadrons of dragoons and Clarke's brigade,<sup>2</sup> and the whole force again advanced northwardly along the causeway, with parties of infantry thrown out upon the marshy meadows on either side. There was some resistance near the junction with the San Cosmé road—a point referred to in the Mexican accounts as Santo Tomás—where a redoubt had been thrown up. The redoubt and some houses near by were only held by infantry, and the defenders were driven out without much difficulty. Here Worth halted once more to reorganize his column before attempting the San Cosmé gate. A part of his leading troops had, however, already

<sup>1</sup> For an hour and a half, according to one authority, who severely blames Worth for the delay.—(Stevens, 101.)

<sup>2</sup> The sixth infantry, forming a part of Clarke's brigade, had gone astray after the capture of Chapultepec and joined Quitman's column, with which it remained the rest of the day.

gone half-way down the road toward the gate, and had captured a barricade, before they could be recalled.

After remaining at Santo Tomás for a considerable time, during which Scott came up and ordered an immediate advance, Worth pushed on slowly and with great caution, leaving Cadwalader's brigade to hold the Santo Tomás redoubt. All the way from Santo Tomás to the built-up portion of the city the San Cosmé causeway was lined with houses; and about midway between the city and Santo Tomás stood the garita, protected by several barricades across the roads on either side of the aqueduct. The westernmost of these barricades, as already stated, had been taken by Worth's infantry before they could be recalled; and when Worth finally advanced in full force, the Mexicans had placed two pieces of artillery behind it. Worth thereupon resorted to the same method he had adopted with success at Monterey, and which he had learned from the Texans. Sending Clarke's brigade to the right and Garland's to the left of the causeway, the men took possession of the houses and broke their way through the walls until they came abreast of the first barricade, which was at once abandoned by its defenders.

Beyond that barricade the American advance was resumed in the same manner; but it was materially helped by placing a mountain howitzer in the belfry of the Church of San Cosmé, not more than two or three hundred yards from the garita.<sup>1</sup> A second howitzer was placed on another commanding building, and with the help of these guns and the slow but steady advance through the buildings, Worth's troops by five o'clock in the afternoon were well up to the garita. A piece of artillery was then boldly advanced along the road; the Americans—mounting to the tops of the houses on each side—poured a heavy fire of musketry at short range into the works near the garita; and almost in a moment the place was won.

It was now possible for Worth's whole force to advance directly along the causeway and to bring up the heavy ar-

<sup>1</sup> This was an inspiration of Lieutenant U. S. Grant of the fourth infantry.

tillery which had been held at Santo Tomás until the road was clear. By nine o'clock at night a twenty-four-pounder gun and a ten-inch mortar were in position, and a few shots were fired from each in the direction of the Government Palace, by way of notifying the inhabitants of the city that the gate was in possession of the Americans. At about the same time, Worth was reinforced by Riley's brigade.

It had been Scott's intention that Worth's should be the main attack, and Quitman's in the nature of a feint.

"I had been, from the first," he reported, "well aware that the western or San Cosmé, was the less difficult route to the centre and conquest of the capital; and therefore intended that Quitman should only manoeuvre and threaten the Belén or southwestern gate, in order to favor the main attack by Worth—knowing that the strong defences at the Belén were directly under the guns of the much stronger fortress, called the *citadel*, just within. . . . These views I repeatedly, in the course of the day, communicated to Major General Quitman; but being in hot pursuit—gallant himself, and ably 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 his column—Quitman continued to press forward."<sup>1</sup>

The advance of Quitman's column, as above stated, was composed of Smith's brigade, which had previously been deployed in the fields southeast of Chapultepec. To this brigade were soon added the whole of Quitman's own division, the ninth and twelfth infantry regiments from Pierce's brigade of Pillow's division, the sixth infantry from Worth's, and portions of other corps which had gone astray in the confusion following the assault on the palace. The column was temporarily halted by the first barricade across the road, which was situated about a mile from Chapultepec;<sup>2</sup> but that obstacle was presently carried, with the effective aid, it would seem, of the fire in flank from Duncan's battery of Worth's division already mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scott's Report, Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 382.

<sup>2</sup> According to the map published with Quitman's official report. A table of distances given in a footnote to Claiborne's *Life of Quitman*, I, 356, is inconsistent with the map and evidently incorrect.

<sup>3</sup> Quitman, in his report, speaks of Duncan's "brisk fire of artillery" as having occurred when the column was approaching the garita of Belén. This







Quitman here halted to reorganize his column and make preparations for the attack on the batteries at the garita. The South Carolina regiment of volunteers, armed with muskets and bayonets, and the rifle regiment of Smith's brigade, who had no bayonets, were intermingled—three rifles and three bayonets being placed under each arch of the aqueduct. In this order, the two regiments were to lead the attack by advancing from arch to arch; and in this manner they pressed forward under "a tremendous fire of artillery and small arms from the batteries at the garita, the Paseo, and a large body of the enemy on the Piedad road."<sup>1</sup>

Santa Anna himself had retreated to the garita of Belén after the fall of Chapultepec and had supervised the arrangements for its defence. He brought up four pieces of artillery which had been previously so placed as to command the Piedad road, and he posted in support of the guns various detachments, made up partly from the troops who had guarded the roads near Chapultepec and partly from troops who had been held in reserve in the citadel. These parties were in addition to the regular garrison of the garita under General Terrés, which numbered less than two hundred men with three four-pounder guns. Having made these dispositions, Santa Anna next went to the garita of San Cosmé, but he failed to designate any one of the several generals near Belén to command the defences at that point—an omission which seems to have caused confusion.

As the American column slowly gained ground along the Belén causeway the Mexican troops suffered severely from the fire of the rifles. A part of their infantry, which had been engaged at Chapultepec, and which Terrés had considered as his reserve, fell back without notice to him. The garita itself was being badly knocked about by Quitman's artillery, and the small force at the garita, now reduced, according to Terrés, to less than eighty men, was demoralized.

statement does not accord with the evidence of Worth (in his report) or of Stevens (in his *Campaigns*) or with the maps of the locality.

<sup>1</sup> The Paseo here referred to was a road running north from the Belén gate through what was then open country. It was called by the Mexicans the Paseo Nuevo or Paseo de Bucareli; and is now the Calle de Bucareli.

Terrés, therefore, abandoned the garita, taking his artillery with him and falling back to the citadel and at twenty minutes past one Quitman's column entered the gate.

About three hundred yards further on, upon the north side of the street, was the citadel. A little further, on the south side of the street, was the solid and ancient building of the *Colegio de las Mochas de Belén*—then a workhouse for women, and afterward the great prison of the capital. Otherwise the ground immediately within the garita was open, and the American troops were without protection except such as was afforded by the garita itself, the arches of the aqueduct, and the intrenchments which had been thrown up by the Mexicans. To advance further was soon found to be impossible, and for the remainder of the afternoon Quitman and his men were reduced to holding on with dogged energy to the ground they had already gained.

Santa Anna learned at San Cosmé of the loss of the garita of Belén. With three battalions of regulars he hurried to the citadel and sent orders to the troops on the east side of the city to join him. He reached the citadel just as Quitman's men were coming past the garita, and they were driven back to shelter by the fire of Santa Anna's reinforcements. Here Santa Anna met Terrés. "Blind with rage," the former wrote, "I struck him two or three times, ordered his sword and his insignia of rank to be taken from him—declaring him to be an unworthy servant of a nation which had overwhelmed him with kindness," and ordered him under arrest. Terrés was to be Santa Anna's scapegoat.<sup>1</sup>

From this time, perhaps about two o'clock in the afternoon until almost five, the Mexicans under Santa Anna's direct command kept up a steady fire of artillery from the citadel, from the batteries on the Paseo, and from the *Colegio de las Mochas*. A number of sorties were also attempted. "I endeavored," says Santa Anna, "to dislodge the enemy with the active battalion of Morelia and other

<sup>1</sup> Santa Anna's Report, *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 117. Terrés was duly tried by a military tribunal, General Micheltorena, of California fame, acting as his advocate, and was acquitted.—(Roa Bárcena, 494.)