

detachments, and it was not possible, although our soldiers on this occasion acted with extraordinary courage."¹

At last, about five o'clock, Santa Anna received an urgent message from San Cosmé. He hurried back at once, but arrived only just in time to witness the capture of that garita by Worth; and, collecting as best he could the scattered troops, Santa Anna marched them back again to the citadel, which he re-entered at about seven o'clock in the evening and found everything quiet. The firing on Quitman had ceased at dark.

Until after midnight the positions of the several combatants remained unchanged. Worth and Quitman were both bringing up their heavy artillery, and the latter was engaged in intrenching himself to resist further sorties from the citadel. Within the citadel Santa Anna was holding a council of war.

"In the council," according to Santa Anna, "the events of that and the previous days were rehearsed. Regrets were expressed at the situation to which we had been reduced by the disobedience of some, the cowardice of others, and the general lack of *morale* of our army, which was such that we could not look for any better conduct. It was also explained in regard to the latter point that the continual revolutions, our social disorganization, and the bad system of recruiting the army had greatly aggravated this evil, at a time when, by reason of our distress, the soldiers were not supplied with what belonged to them, as had actually happened on this very day, when they had not partaken of food; that supplies had not been furnished them for the four days previous; and that no one knew whether on the next day they would have anything to eat. The lack of ammunition for another day's fighting was also explained, and the small number of men who remained; and finally that as we were reduced to the mere precincts of the citadel it was certain that the enemy would attack it with artillery (*apuraria sus proyectiles*) and it would not be possible to remain in it two hours. To defend the buildings in the city would be to run the risk of its destruction without a hope of success since the population, with few exceptions, took no part in the struggle."²

It was, therefore, after some discussion, unanimously agreed to evacuate the city before dawn. The movement

¹ Santa Anna's Report, *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 118.

² *Ibid.*, 119.

was begun at once, and by one o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, the fourteenth of September, the Mexican army—or what remained of it, for many had already deserted—was on its way to Guadalupe Hidalgo. Alvarez, with his cavalry, had previously been ordered from his post at the Hacienda de Morales to the same town; and there Santa Anna found himself, by early morning, at the head of some few thousands of defeated and disorganized troops.

Simultaneously with the evacuation of the city by the army, the municipal authorities sent out a deputation to wait on Scott and endeavor to obtain favorable terms of capitulation. The party, at one o'clock in the morning, came with a white flag to Worth's advanced post, and he sent them under escort to Tacubaya, where they arrived at about four. They presented their requests, to which, says Scott,

"I promptly replied, that I would sign no capitulation; that the city had been virtually in our possession from the time of the lodgments effected by Worth and Quitman the day before; that I regretted the silent escape of the Mexican army; that I should levy upon the city a moderate contribution for special purposes; and that the American army should come under no terms, not *self-imposed*—such only as its own honor, the dignity of the United States, and the spirit of the age, should, in my opinion, imperiously demand and impose."¹

At the same time orders were sent to Worth and Quitman "to advance slowly and cautiously" (to guard against treachery) toward the heart of the city, and to occupy its stronger and more commanding points. Worth therefore advanced straight ahead along what is now the Puente de Alvarado and the Avenida de los Hombres Ilustres, along the northerly side of the Alameda; then turned south along the easterly end of the park, and halted about sunrise, by Scott's order, in front of the present site of the Opera House. Quitman, before receiving Scott's order, had been approached at dawn by a white flag from the citadel, the bearers of which informed him that the city had been abandoned. Finding

¹ Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 383. The contribution levied on the city was later fixed at \$150,000.

the information true, Quitman moved through some of the smaller streets into the Calle de San Juan Letran, passed the spot where Worth was halted, and proceeded straight down the Avenida de San Francisco to the Plaza de la Constitución. He found the Palace of the Government being looted by bands of native thieves whom he quickly drove out, and then hoisted the American flag and put the palace in charge of the battalion of marines.

At about eight o'clock in the morning Scott and his staff rode in and entered the palace. They had hardly done so when a desultory fire of musketry broke out from the houses in various parts of the city. The first shot, according to General Worth, was fired at a group of officers at the head of his column and wounded Brigadier-General Garland. A number of the Americans were hit.

"The free use of heavy battering guns upon every building from which fire proceeded," as Worth wrote, "together with musketry from some of our men thrown out as skirmishers, soon quelled these hidden and dastardly enemies. . . . This was no time for half-way measures; and if many innocent persons suffered incidentally, under the just infliction of punishment we found it necessary to bestow on these miscreants from the jails, the responsibility should rest on the barbarous and vindictive chief who imposed upon us the necessity."¹

In less than thirty-six hours these stern methods of repression were completely effective. It was, indeed, no time, as Worth remarked, for "half-way measures." Self preservation, as well as the imperative need for order in the interest of the city itself, required the summary use of force. It is to be feared that in many cases the inhabitants of houses from which American troops had been fired on were indiscriminately killed and that some unoffending inhabitants were shot in the streets; but there was no looting, and on the whole the more respectable elements of society seem to have been relieved by the restoration of order.

They had been in a state of consternation, according to the British minister, when they learned that the American army was actually within the city.

¹ Worth's Report; *ibid.*, 393.

"Much more anxiety, however," he continued, "was manifested in consequence of General Tornel having thought proper to arm the 'Leperos' with knives for the ostensible purpose of destroying the American soldiers; added to which the gates of the principal prison were thrown open by the Mexican Authorities just before the evacuation of the city, whereby nearly two thousand criminals were let loose upon society. . . . Considering the composition of the American Army, great moderation and respect of property has been shewn, and every effort has been made by the officers to tranquillize the people."¹

The aspect of the city, while the disturbances lasted, much resembled its aspect during a domestic revolution. Churches and shops were closed and the streets were deserted. But there was this difference: in the revolutions the contending parties were in the habit of firing upon each other from safe distances, and casualties were few, whereas now the Americans were in deadly earnest. "Our people in a single day," says Hitchcock, "killed more Mexicans in the streets than fell during an entire three weeks of one of their domestic wars."² "This matter of being killed," wrote another staff officer, "was not (to use a Hibernicism) what they had been accustomed to."³

Scott's course in this unfortunate business has been commended by the Mexicans themselves as being fundamentally right and humane;⁴ and he was supported at the time by the authorities of the municipality and the authorities of the church. Confidence was gradually restored. The inhabitants began returning from the neighboring country. The streets were again filled with people. The shops were opened. The archbishop, after "some plain talk" from General Scott,⁵ opened the cathedral at six o'clock on Monday morning, September 20, and from that time forward until the close of the war the American army continued in undisturbed possession of the Mexican capital.⁶

¹ Bankhead to Palmerston, Sept. 28, 1847, No. 86; *F. O. MSS.* Mexican historians, it should be noted, attribute the firing on the American troops principally to deserters and members of the national guard.—(Roa Bárcena, 507.)

² Hitchcock, 307.

³ Roa Bárcena, 511.

⁴ Semmes, 466.

⁵ Hitchcock, 306.

⁶ The reports of General Scott and his subordinates in regard to the attack on the garitas, the entry of the city, and the desultory fighting in the streets are printed in Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 375-431. Santa Anna's report is

Scott in his official report to his government asserted that in the two days of September 12 and 13, after deducting the garrison of Mixcoac (then the general depot) and that of Tacubaya, his whole force was but 7,180, and that "after deducting the new garrison of Chapultepec, with the killed and wounded of the two days, we took possession (September 14) of this great capital with less than six thousand men."¹ Well might he congratulate himself and his army upon the brilliant result of the campaign, begun at Puebla thirty-eight days before.

It is quite impossible to form any satisfactory estimate of the Mexican force engaged at the gates of the capital. The losses by desertion had been so great and continuous, the army had been in such a state of disintegration at the time, that its strength from this cause alone was diminishing in a steadily increasing ratio. During the American attack on Chapultepec a large garrison was left in the city, and probably more than four thousand horse and foot watched the battle from the Hacienda de Morales. During the attacks on the garitas the cavalry was not employed at all, and although reinforcements from the southern and eastern gates were brought up it is likely that these parts of the city were not wholly denuded of troops. The most that can be asserted with any degree of confidence is that Santa Anna, at the close of the thirteenth of September, must have had under his command, including his cavalry, twice as many men as Scott.

The latter doubtless persistently overestimated the numerical force of his opponent; but he was able to state, with at least approximate accuracy, the Mexican losses. Summing up the results of his campaign in the valley of Mexico, he declared that—

"this small force has beaten . . . the whole Mexican army, of (at the beginning) thirty-odd thousand men—posted, always, in chosen posi-

in the appendix to his *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, 114-120. Reports by other eye-witnesses are to be found in Ripley, II, 428-445; Wilcox, 469-486; Hitchcock, 303-307; Semmes, 457-466; Quitman, I, 367-391. See also Roa Bárcena, 490-511; *Apuntes para la Historia de la Guerra*, 317-333.

¹ Scott's Report; Sen. Doc. 1, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 384.

tions, behind entrenchments, or more formidable defences of nature and art; killed or wounded, of that number, more than 7,000 officers and men; taken 3,730 prisoners, one-seventh officers, including 13 generals, of whom 3 had been presidents of this republic; captured more than 20 colors and standards, 75 pieces of ordnance, besides 57 wall-pieces, 20,000 small arms, an immense quantity of shots, shells, powder, &c., &c."¹

The losses of the American army in accomplishing these great results had not been slight. On September 12, 13, and 14 they had lost 130 killed, 703 wounded, and 29 missing, or 862 in all—Quitman's command alone having 473 casualties. During the whole campaign the total casualties in battle had amounted to no less than 2,703, or nearly twenty-five per cent. of the force which left Puebla near the beginning of August.²

These heavy losses led to the severe criticisms both of Scott's strategy and his tactics, of which the most serious have been already mentioned; and he was not spared in respect to Chapultepec and the attack on the gates of the capital. Many of his principal officers thought the southern gates of the city should have been attacked, in preference to the western, and some found fault with his bombardment of Chapultepec and the disposition of his troops.³ Grant, who professed great admiration for Scott's generalship, thought Chapultepec might readily have been turned. "In later years, if not at the time, the battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec," he wrote, "have seemed to me to be wholly unnecessary." Indeed, he questioned the whole strategy of the valley campaign, and thought the line of Scott's march should have passed thirty miles north of Puebla and across the plains of Apam; but, as he philosophically observed, "General Scott's successes are an answer to all criticism."⁴

Scott's adversary escaped serious criticism for the days

¹ Scott's Report; *ibid.*, 384.

² See detailed returns appended to Scott's Report; *ibid.*, 431-470.

³ See Ripley, II, 467-486, for strongly adverse comments. These are replied to at length in Stevens, 88-105.

⁴ Grant's *Personal Memoirs*, I, 154, 166.

of the twelfth and thirteenth of September. It was obvious that, being threatened both at Chapultepec and the San Antonio gate, he could not venture to leave either unguarded; and although Bravo complained that he had been left at Chapultepec without adequate support, he seems to have had as many troops as could man the works about the palace without getting in each other's way. The real causes of defeat were the utter demoralization of the Mexican army, officers included,¹ and the hopeless inefficiency and lack of enterprise of their cavalry.

In spite of the condition of his army Santa Anna was not yet ready to abandon the contest. To do so at that time must have seemed to him an abandonment of all hope for his own future; and if Mexico was to be ultimately forced to yield, he would let some one else bear the responsibility of surrender. For a few hours he was even possessed of the delusion that the capital might be regained.

His first idea, after arriving with his beaten troops at Guadalupe Hidalgo, was to endeavor by a rapid movement to overwhelm the small American garrison at Puebla, and by interposing between Scott and the sea to strike a dangerous and possibly fatal blow at the invading army. The plan, if Santa Anna's information was correct, was not without prospects of success. He expected to find in or near Puebla over three thousand national guards and guerrilleros. He therefore sent General Alvarez with all the men under his command—now only six hundred in number—by way of Texcoco and Texmelúcan, while Santa Anna himself, with two thousand horse and four light field-pieces, set out by the plains of Apam and Tlaxcala. The union of these forces would bring 5,700 men into line at Puebla, with which to attack an American force of less than 2,200, including the sick. Besides, it was not unreasonable to expect recruits from the population of Puebla itself. Santa Anna therefore lost no time. He directed ex-President Herrera to

¹ The officers, says Grant, would "simply quit, without being particularly whipped, but because they had fought enough."—(*Ibid.*, 169.)

start at once with all the remaining infantry and artillery and march to Querétaro, a hundred and fifty miles north. At the same time Santa Anna, with his detachment, set out for Puebla.

He had gone only about twelve miles when he was overtaken at the little village of San Cristóbal by some inhabitants of the city of Mexico, who begged him to return with his army and take part in the struggle which they assured him was going on in the city streets. Their story was that the sight of the American flag hoisted on the Palace of the Government had caused such excitement that the people had risen *en masse*, had penned up Scott's troops in the main plaza, and had taken six of his guns.

"I confess," wrote Santa Anna, "that I was extremely moved by this plausible story." He therefore instantly determined to retrace his steps, and did so, at the same time sending orders to Herrera to return with his infantry. By the afternoon of September 14 Santa Anna, after his agitating night and the long march and countermarch of the day, was back at the Peralvillo garita, the northern gate of the city.

"Señor Alvarez and I," he wrote, "went as far as the streets of the capital, in order to assure ourselves with our own eyes of what was happening in the city and to act according to circumstances. . . . As great as my enthusiasm was over the exaggerated reports that were given me at San Cristóbal, so great also was the annoyance caused me by being undeceived; for I could only observe a few scattering shots which various individuals were firing from street corners at the enemy. The tale of the capture of pieces of artillery was false, as also that of the general rising of all classes, and their besieging the invaders in the Plaza."

Nevertheless he stationed some of Alvarez's men near the Peralvillo gate and sent parties of cavalry into the suburbs of the capital to aid in any rising that might be attempted; but though they watched all day on Wednesday, the fifteenth of September, they perceived no symptoms of a general revolt. On the contrary, he was handed that morning a copy of a proclamation signed by Manuel Reyes Veramendi,

the principal alcalde, urging the people of Mexico to preserve the peace. Santa Anna at once sent Veramendi an indignant letter, expressing astonishment at what he called a shameful and unpatriotic act, and threatening him and the other members of the ayuntamiento with all the penalties of treason for daring to discourage the citizens "who rightly defend their homes, their daughters and their wives."¹

On the next morning, Thursday, September 16, Pacheco and Alcorta, the Secretaries of Relations and War, arrived at Guadalupe, and at their instance, or at least with their concurrence, Santa Anna issued a decree dated that day, in which he resigned his office as President of the republic, on the ground that it was necessary to continue the war at all hazards, and it was not proper to expose the chief magistrate to its risks. He further, by virtue (as he asserted) of the extraordinary powers conferred on him by Congress, directed the president of the Supreme Court of Justice to discharge the duties of President, associating with himself Generals Alcorta and Herrera, who were to reside at Querétaro until Congress should otherwise direct. Santa Anna then resumed his march for Puebla, where he arrived on the afternoon of September 21.

The American garrison left by Scott at Puebla when he marched for the valley of Mexico consisted, as already related, of only 393 effectives, with about 1,800 invalids, all under the command of Colonel Thomas Childs, of the regular army. They were expected to hold this important point upon Scott's line of communications, to keep in order a city of some eighty thousand inhabitants and to guard a depot of valuable supplies.

The city of Puebla, built upon a plain more than seven thousand feet above the sea, near the eastern base of the great volcanoes which guard the valley of Mexico, was noted for its multitude of churches, its wide and regular streets, and its large number of old solidly built Spanish houses. On the north and east sides of the city runs a small stream,

¹ Santa Anna's report in *Apelacion al buen Criterio*, App., 120-122. The correspondence with Veramendi is at pp. 131-133.

just beyond which rises an abrupt ridge whose two highest points, known as the Cerro de Loreto and the Cerro de Guadalupe, then constituted the principal points of military defence. The first of these, the Cerro de Loreto, was crowned by a regular fortified work, which mounted at that time two guns and a few mountain howitzers; while a massive church on the Cerro de Guadalupe was almost as effective to resist any attack unsupported by heavy artillery. Just within the northeasterly quarter of the city, and not far from the foot of these hills, at a corner of the Plaza de San José, were large barracks known as the Cuartel San José, in which was established the principal depot of the American troops. The sick were, however, quartered in hospitals in other parts of the city.

Hardly had the last of Scott's troops left Puebla when unmistakable signs of hostility began to show themselves among the populace. A number of mules were stolen, a party of men sent out to recover them were attacked and driven back, straggling soldiers were cut off and murdered, and shots were occasionally fired at the barracks; but for some time nothing like an organized attack was begun. The alcalde of the city and the better class of inhabitants endeavored to preserve order; yet as time went on the attacks became more and more frequent and serious, until by the night of the thirteenth of September something resembling a siege was in progress.¹ The assailants now consisted principally of irregular troops raised in the neighborhood, under the command of General Rea, of the Mexican army; but as these were mostly mounted men, badly armed and unprovided with artillery, they could make no very serious impression upon the garrison, which was now wholly withdrawn to the shelter of the San José barracks and the adjacent posts upon the hills outside the city.

For many days and nights a noisy but not very effectual fusillade was kept up, "after the manner," says Ripley, "of

¹ The news of the armistice in the city of Mexico reached Puebla about August 30, and on the evening of September 12 it was reported that the armistice was at an end. This probably encouraged the attempt to besiege the American garrison.

Mexican revolutions," and relatively little injury was done to the garrison. Many of the sick had so far recovered as to be able to bear arms, but Childs could only count on about five hundred fighting men, and the necessity of constant watchfulness was extremely wearing to the limited number of effectives.

Such was the state of affairs on September 21, when Santa Anna and his men reached Puebla. As they were mostly cavalry equipped with short-range carbines, they were not much better fitted than Rea's guerrilleros to assault the American posts, but Santa Anna's artillery, if properly handled, might have made some impression. Santa Anna, however, had no better success than Rea. But on September 25, he sent in a formal summons to Colonel Childs, warning him that he was now in face of an army of eight thousand men, and offering to permit him to march out with the honors of war, a demand which Childs at once refused, stating that he felt "fully confident" of being able to maintain his post. And for the next week the same sort of feeble and unorganized attacks upon the American posts went on, without any advantage to the Mexican arms.

But on the first day of October Santa Anna, having received news of the approach of an American military train with a strong escort from Vera Cruz and Jalapa, left Rea in the city with a few guerrilleros to continue the siege, and started with the rest of his men to meet these new enemies. He had only got as far as Amozoc, eleven miles from Puebla, when the national guards of Puebla began deserting in such numbers that Santa Anna feared his whole force would be dissipated, and he therefore sent back to Puebla all the remaining local troops, together with the whole of Alvarez's small body of Oaxaca infantry and a portion of his cavalry. With his remaining troops Santa Anna advanced through the pass of El Pinal as far as Nopalúcan, having with him at this time, according to his own account, a little more than a thousand cavalry and six light field-pieces.

The village of Nopalúcan is distant somewhat more than

thirty miles northeasterly from Puebla, on the road to Perote and Jalapa, and was then of some importance as the junction of roads leading in various directions. One road led southeasterly toward Orizaba and Córdoba, and another northwesterly over the plains of Apam toward the northern part of the valley of Mexico.

While halted at Nopalúcan Santa Anna received information from Querétaro that General Isidro Reyes was on his way thence to join him, "with one brigade and two siege pieces." Hoping, it would seem, to effect a junction with Reyes and then fall upon the rear of the Americans, Santa Anna—instead of waiting, as he had intended, in the pass of El Pinal, on the Puebla road, west of Nopalúcan—marched off ten miles northwesterly to Huamantla, a village set in the midst of a fertile valley. This was on Friday, the eighth of October. Reyes, however, had not yet arrived, and leaving the six pieces of artillery under a small guard in Huamantla, Santa Anna, with the bulk of his cavalry, marched back across country to watch the pass.

The approaching American force, which Santa Anna was hoping to defeat, consisted of about twenty-five hundred men, with eight pieces of artillery, under the command of General Joseph Lane—a political general who had commanded a brigade of Indiana volunteers at the battle of Buena Vista. He had continued with Taylor's army through the summer of 1847, but early in September he was despatched with a brigade made up of the newly organized fourth Indiana and fourth Ohio volunteers to join Scott's column. At Vera Cruz he was put in command of a body of troops consisting of two batteries or parts of batteries of regular artillery, a company of Louisiana mounted volunteers, and two detachments of recruits for various of the regular regiments then at the front—in addition to his two regiments of Indiana and Ohio volunteers.

Leaving Vera Cruz on September 19, 1847, Lane advanced without opposition as far as the Paso de Ovejas, where he had a skirmish with some guerrilleros, and then without further difficulty marched on to Jalapa, where he overtook another