

obtained their position, and there they stood in the drenching rain, chilled to the very marrow, until three o'clock A. M. (on the 20th) when the first gray streak of light allowed them to move. Riley, Cadwallader and Smith defiled their men into the rear of the enemy's batteries, through a ravine, which so covered their approach that they came to a halt almost within leaping distance of the the Mexican guns. All being ready the word "*charge!*" broke the stillness of the morning. The Mexicans were completely surprised—all their attention having been given to the front and southern approaches, from whence Scott had made his first demonstration the previous afternoon. The struggle was brief, but extremely bloody, for the Spaniards fought with the desperation of despair. Valencia's entire columns soon were leaping from the embankments, flying toward the city. But Shields, with his volunteers, was ready on the highway, and caught the columns as they passed in the network of a terrible cross-fire. The victory was complete. Scott reported as the results of the affair:—"One road to the capital opened; 700 of the enemy killed; 813 prisoners, including, among 88 officers, 4 Generals;* 22 pieces of brass ordnance, half of large caliber; thousands of small-arms and accouterments; an immense quantity of shot, shells, powder and cartridges; 700 pack-mules, etc., etc., all in our hands."

The number of Americans engaged was 4,500; that of the enemy, under Valencia, in the works, was 7,000; while Santa Anna held 12,000 in reserve at San Angel. The divisions of Worth and Quitman, which were to aid the assault by diversions in front (on the east) were too late for the action—the enemy being routed before they could form on the stony field. The victory, as Scott reported, opened one highway to the city. He therefore allowed the troops no rest, but ordered Twiggs and Pillow to follow up the flying enemy and press them as far in retreat as possible, since the pursuit would give, also, the rear approach planned against the strong post of San Antonio, which commanded the other road, to the capital. Quitman's and Worth's divisions, meanwhile, were ordered to countermarch, the first to garrison the head-quarters and dépôt at San Augustin, the others to carry the assault on Antonio from the front. Garland's and Clarke's brigades moved upon

* Salas, Mendoza Garcia, and Guadalupe.