His word was onward: on the day
When warriors met in stern array,
And brave men followed, where he led,
Secure in valor's path to tread.

Wo to the direst of his foes,
Who dared the hero's arm oppose,
Where mid the thickest of the fight,
His sabre flash'd its deadly light!

But Death still "loves a shining mark,"
And mid the din of conflict, hark!
The cannon deals the mighty blow
That lays the dauntless soldier low!

He fell!—but the fair hand of Fame,
On her high altar graved his name,
And Liberty's bright genius, wept,
Above the bier, where Ringgold slept!

REFLECTIONS ON MEXICO.

Mexico is full of objects calculated to inspire serious speculation in the contemplative mind. Her future, it is true, is dark and repulsive; but the past abounds with lessons worthy the study of every nation. An acquaintance with the history of Aztec as it was at the invasion of Cortez, compared with a view of her condition subsequent to that period, must convince every one, of the humbling truth, that she has gained nothing from Eu-

ropean civilization. It is true that under the native kings, the subjection of the people was perfect; and their religious, and even festive rites, were bloody and revolting. But were not the people happier, more intelligent, and more refined under the Montezumas, than they have ever been since the conquest? And was the amount of suffering entailed by their religion, equal to that perpetrated through anarchy, misrule, civil war, and ecclesiastical bigotry? Has not the curse of the Aztecan, his last sad throb for his country, fallen on it like that of the Moor on Spain, and withered the energies of the conquerors?

The fact is, the hue and cry of liberty, and the rights of man, and freedom from crowned power, is the most absurd delusion that ever misled a nation, when the people are destitute of the qualifications necessary to support their nationality. Remove the intellectual slave from bodily degradation, give him a government the best that ever existed or can exist, and surround him with every thing that man calls desirable, leaving the mind untouched, and he will be a slave still. Place the Mexican under Montezuma, stopping his ears to the din of freedom, and he will be exactly what the Indian is now. Let Mexico be under what government she may, it never will, never can deliver her from wretchedness and frequent insurrection, until an influence higher than corporeal action begins its work upon her. He is mistaken who supposes liberty to be merely an exemption from hereditary governors and military oppression, and that to obtain it, the only requisition is a successful revolution. It is more—it is a study, that demands for its mastery the laborious

training of a patient and well-balanced mind. The heroes of the American revolution were no enthusiasts—no Phaetons madly dashing down the political horizon to destruction. Even when the storm had subsided, and peace revisited their plains, they felt that they had but cleared the threshold to the sacred shrine—had they *remained* there, where would have been American liberty?

Perhaps the most interesting objects in Mexico are the extensive ruins scattered more or less throughout the whole country. Until very lately these have received but little attention from travellers, and consequently our knowledge of them is at present but imperfect. While the pyramids of Egypt and the antiquities of Greece and Asia have been described and delineated, from histories to school geographies, the immense palaces of an unknown world are left to moulder in silent darkness, unnoticed and unknown. Once in many years, a solitary Stephens breaks in upon their solitudes, and "writes a book" of "all he saw;" but a few years, and the description shares the fate of its prototype, and *American* antiquities again become a solecism.

By moonlight one of these ruined cities is an impressive spectacle. Then the gaps and irregularities caused by time are invisible, and the long rows of massive stone buildings, heavy with the richest architecture, environed and surmounted by trees of two hundred years' growth, all apparently fresh from the tool of the architect, burst upon the astonished traveller like the regions of Arabian genii. Few have ever gazed upon them, under these circumstances, without involuntarily bending forward to view the inhabitants. But they—the ones for whose

revels these piles were built—where are they? Egypt, great as is her antiquity, can define the race that erected her wonders; but no memorial—written or traditional—may ever tell of the builders of Aztec. Ages after ages, her cities have mouldered in the forest, while the crowds who once thronged their streets are mingled together in undistinguishable dust. While man was battling with man in other worlds, an unknown race were doing the same here; and the busy hammer, the plying oar, and wild song of the hunter, echoed here, as they did in Africa or Asia. How the mind strains and wrestles for but one glimpse of these scenes! but

"Oblivion laughs, and says, The prey is mine."

The bloody tale of tragedy, or the softer one of a princess's love, breathed forth under the waving woods of Aztec, had no historian to transmit them to the future.

Before the stripping of churches by the different revolutionary parties, the stranger was surprised by a view of the immense wealth of the city of Mexico. Most of the ornaments in the cathedrals, and in the houses of the rich, were of solid silver, while immense quantities of that metal, as well as of gold, formed personal ornaments of the ladies and grandees. Yet great as was the amount of these precious substances, it was a mere trifle compared to their abundance in the days of Montezuma. The death of this monarch and subversion of his empire, form one of those events in history, on which the mind dwells with a painful, indefinite sensation. The fancied child of the sun, nations rose and fell at his nod, and the wealth of his treasures would have bought a continent.

The mind dwells on his splendor as on a fairy tale. The very materials of his palaces were silver; and with the gardens and other appendages, covered space enough for a large city. The utmost order reigned in his vast dominions, and capital crimes were almost unknown.

In contemplating the palaces of the city, one can almost fancy that he beholds their illustrious inmate, reposing in solitary majesty during the heat of a noonday sun. Perhaps he is seated at dinner—how still and awe-like is the room! Those few nobles standing together scarcely seem to breathe; and the antechamber, though filled with grandees and royal guards, is quiet as the grave. Four young girls wait upon him—the dark-eyed favorites from his seraglio—but their tread is muffled, and their lips sealed. Men are crouching before a fellow man, as before Deity itself. Now evening arrives, and he issues forth to enjoy recreation, or to amuse himself with the objects of his whimsical fancy—the maimed and monstrous. A group of these are brought before him; some with but one arm, some with four, one without ears, others with four thumbs, and among these the monarch unbends from royalty, and sports and smiles as an infant.

These were scenes of pleasure or recreation; but when national interests were at stake—when a great crime had been perpetrated, or the nation invaded, then Montezuma was again a *monarch*. The people crowded under his banners, and his presence was sufficient to inspire them with the wildest enthusiasm. In the darkest hurryings of battle, the name of Montezuma drove them on to the most desperate undertakings. The system of government was complete. The people were oppressed, it is true, and

the king was the oppressor. But mutual confidence was unshaken, and none desired nor thought of a change of condition.

The empire of New Spain was founded in blood—not the blood of true patriots resisting foreign oppression, but of a harmless invaded people, who were either murdered or torn from their ancestral homes to perish among the mines and high-roads of their taskmasters. But they did not yield without a struggle, and but for the superior weapons of their adversaries, they would have swept the Spaniards from the country. On the memorable night denominated by Cortez *Noche Tristi* (desolate night), they poured in determined thousands upon the little band of adventurers, who in vain endeavored to resist the onset. Man after man was captured by them, until Cortez and his few remaining followers fled from the city. Then deeds, horrible beyond description, were enacted by the infuriated multitude. Revenge loosened her bloody hand, and descended upon the prisoners. Maddened by their former losses, the populace rushed upon them, tore the heart from the bosom, and, while yet quivering with pulsation, threw it with dreadful shouts at the feet of their idol. Then the heads were wrenched from the shoulders, and used as balls by the people, while the bodies were precipitated to the rocks below. Fear, for the first time, brooded over the desolate Spaniards, and they wept like children for home.

The political history of Mexico since the emancipation from the mother-country, is a sad jumble of murders, robberies, and revolutions. It is not wonderful that anarchy has struck its baneful roots far into her soil; but

that, as one government, she has existed at all. The rulers have rioted in spoil and carnage, while the people have been robbed of almost every thing worth possessing. The churches have shared a similar fate, and even the cloak of the prelate has often been no defence from the stiletto of the bandit. All confidence or credit is lost, and, politically considered, the inhabitants are no longer a nation.

Still, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, Mexico, under an efficient leader, might become a powerful nation. Her sons have proven their courage in the present war with the United States, and were there but a Xantippus to organize them, or a Hannibal to lead them, they might give us as much trouble as Carthage gave to Rome. No country affords better resources for either offensive or defensive warfare. A handful of brave men, thrown among the passes of their mountains, could repel the united efforts of any army; and how well her plains are adapted to cut up a large force, and thus overcome the advantages of numbers, the battle of Buena Vista is ample testimony. We must look then upon this country as possessing the most abundant resources, and yet unable to use them; as possessing the elements of a mighty nation, and yet unable to combine or modify them; in fine, as a nonentity on the national chronicle, open to the insult and abuse of every enemy, whether domestic or foreign.

During the trying scenes of the republic, much of the original Spanish character has been lost. They are still vain, cruel, and revengeful, like their trans-atlantic brethren; but the stately demeanor, reserved courtesy,

and pride of ancestry, are in a great measure gone; a circumstance, to which the abolition of grades of rank has mainly contributed. This renders the people much more talkative and agreeable than the Spaniards, and perhaps less hidden in their principles. The loquacious traveller is sure to set in action a responsive train, and in less than five minutes the groups of half naked men, women and children, that have ranged themselves around him, with open ears and mouths, make him feel, if not in his native country, at least "*at home*." But, on the other hand, the change of manners is undoubtedly unfavorable to modesty and decorum. The pleasing timidity, so graceful in the female sex, is unknown to Mexico; and the countenances of the handsomest women betray a tinge of coarse vulgarity, or perhaps familiarity, repelling to a foreigner. Beside this, their dress is scant and slovenly, their feet bare, and their whole appearance strongly impresses the beholder as a personification of laziness and immodesty. Groups of both sexes are often seen rolling over the same floor, many of them strangers to each other—Indians, negroes, rancheros, and soldiers. The children are never clothed until they arrive at the age of nine or ten years, and many of the boys are allowed to go two or three years beyond that period.

The eyes of all nations are now bent upon this country, with intense interest; for her future prospects are wrapped in an impenetrable obscurity. Should she continue in a state of war, her very nationality may be taken from her, and the manes of Montezuma terribly avenged; and let peace accrue sooner or later, it must deprive her of some of the richest of her territories.

She has declined European mediation, and would perhaps treat with the same contempt similar offers from an American power. Yet every day is depriving her of new possessions, and every battle of her bravest defenders. Her commerce is ruined, her fields devastated, her cities captured, and her capital threatened by a victorious army. Who may tell her fate, define her future boundaries, or compute her chances of national existence? Will she spring aloft from the destroyer, happier and wiser from experience, and renovate her manners and government? or will her sad people collect in groups upon every sierra, and weep over the triumph of their enemy? In fine, shall the nation of which so much has been anticipated, still exist as a nation, or must she remove from her high position, lower the flag of her independence, and remain only as a mournful example that deliverance from foreign control can never render a people wise or powerful, unless they have among them the elements of self-government?

RESACA DE LA PALMA.

Come and listen, while I tell of the battle that befel
On the frontiers of our country, one pleasant morn in May:
When the Mexicans came forth o'er the "River of the North,"
Filled with hopes of easy conquest, filled with ardor for the fray.

We had marched, with measured tramp, from our sadly furnished camp,
Through a wild and broken country to our Fort at Isabel;
For our food was failing fast, and our powder would not last,
And, to silence Matamoras, were in want of shot and shell.

Having loaded our supplies, word was brought us by our spies,
That the Mexicans were waiting us, with twice three thousand men;
So we knew we had to fight, but we heard it with delight,
Though we numbered with the enemy as scarcely four to ten.

Soon we came to where they stood, flanked by water and by wood,
And their cannon swept the road—but we saw it undismayed;
Though our General, at the best, was indifferently dressed,
In a dingy green frock-coat and in pants of cottonade,

And a broken old straw hat; but we did not care for that—
For calm resolve was on his brow and fire within his eye,
As he turned to Captain May, and we heard him coldly say,
"Yonder cannon must be ours; you must take them, sir, or die!"

Quickly then he to us rode, while his heart with daring glowed—
The high heroic heart of the gallant Captain May—
And we saw his beard and hair, streaming back upon the air,
As, passing on, he shouted—"Charge!" and boldly led the way.

Oh! they heard us from afar, ringing out our wild hurrah,
And they looked on one another, and their swarthy cheeks were pale;

For they felt that, if we came, though they vomited out flame,
Nor cannon balls, nor musketry, nor courage could avail.

First, we broke into a trot, till we felt the foemen's shot,
Then, like resistless torrent, or a storm-wind in its wrath,
Onward, onward we went dashing—o'er the breastwork we went crashing,
And, through and through the Mexicans, we cut our bloody path.

Hand to hand, with the brand, wherever they would stand,
We cut, and we thrust, and we galloped to and fro—
Till they scattered were pell-mell, like the bursting of a shell,
And we thought it all unmanly to strike a flying foe.

Honor to "Rough and Ready," with his mien so calm and steady,
And honor to brave Captain May, and honor to the slain—
Worthy subject of old Runes were the onslaught of dragoons,
Who fought the fight, and won the fight, upon our Texian plain!

BRIGADIER-GENERAL WORTH.

William J. Worth was born in the state of New York, and when a boy, was engaged in a store in Albany. When quite young, the disputes between France and England seemed likely to draw our country into a war with one of the great powers; and when these fears were realized, Worth was one of the first to apply for a

commission in the army. His request was granted, and he received the appointment of 1st lieutenant in the 23d infantry, on the 19th of March, 1813.

In the battle of Chippewa plains, Worth acted as aid to General Scott, and when the nature of that officer's duties are remembered, it will be acknowledged that this was a dangerous and responsible station. Yet he won the admiration of his superior by his excellent conduct, and was noticed by General Brown in complimentary terms. He was further rewarded by a commission as captain, dated August 19th, 1814.

In the sanguinary battle of Niagara, Worth had a further opportunity of proving his military talents. In order to appreciate his services, it will be necessary to remember that General Scott performed most of the active services of that battle; and his aids were required to be in every part of the field, often between the fires of both armies. Worth's escape from death seems almost miraculous, though with most of the commanding officers, including Brown and Scott, he was severely wounded. For some time after the capture of the enemy's battery by Colonel Miller, the two armies were within a few yards of each other, and some of the officers for a short time even commanded sections of their antagonists. When evening arrived, both armies were so completely satiated with slaughter, as to be unable to make further effort.

Captain Worth was rewarded for his bravery in this action, by the thanks of his superior officers, and the rank of major. Although he performed good service during the remainder of the war, yet he had no opportunity of distinguishing himself. At its close he was honored by

an appointment to superintend the West Point Academy, in which responsible station he won the esteem and confidence of all concerned. He was brevetted lieutenant-colonel on the 25th of July, 1824; appointed major of ordnance, in 1832, and colonel of the 8th infantry regiment, July 7th, 1838.

In Florida, Colonel Worth was enabled to act a rather more conspicuous part, than most of the officers in that unfortunate war. The precison that characterizes all his movements was of the utmost service during the campaigns of 1841 and 42, when he compelled several parties of the Indians to surrender. He was brevetted brigadier-general on the 1st of March, 1842. On the 19th of April, he fought the battle of Palaklaklaha, in which a large body of Seminoles were entirely defeated, and several of their chieftains subsequently obliged to surrender.

When General Taylor marched from Corpus Christi to make war upon Mexico, Worth was the second in command, and led the main army to the Rio Grande, while the commander moved towards Point Isabel. Worth planted the flag of his country on the Rio Grande, with his own hand. Soon after, Colonel Twiggs arrived, and claimed the command of Worth's division, on account of priority of commission. His claim being substantiated by the proper documents, Taylor was obliged to confirm it, and Worth, considering himself aggrieved, left the army, reached Washington, and tendered his resignation. In doing so, however, he displayed all the delicacy and reluctance which such a step was calculated to inspire, and expressed his hope that should actual

hostilities take place he might be permitted to resume the command, and declared his entire approbation of the conduct of the commanding general. While at Washington, the aspect at the seat of war changed. News arrived of the danger of Taylor at Fort Brown, and soon after of the march to Point Isabel, and the battles of the 8th and 9th of May. Worth immediately applied for his commission; it was granted, and he hurried on to Texas. He was received by General Taylor with open arms; and conducted the negotiations attending the capitulation of Matamoras.

But another and nobler field was now offered to him at Monterey. General Taylor, with the generosity of a true soldier, intrusted him with the attack upon the Bishop's palace; an almost impregnable fortress, commanding a steep and rocky height, and the key of the road to the interior. This was considered by the whole army as an almost desperate undertaking, and none who saw the division of the general march from camp toward the palace, expected to see half of them return. The peculiar situation of Worth favored this belief; as it was supposed that, in order to atone for his lost opportunities, and stop the voice of calumny, he would rush headlong into danger, and recover his reputation at every hazard. Worth acted differently. He felt his duty to the soldiers, and allowed no personal feeling to hinder its execution. Where the Americans expected the heaviest loss, and perhaps total failure, they were scarcely injured. During the whole time, the troops labored in range of the enemy's guns, crossing ravines, climbing rocks and ledges, wading through water, and carrying

their cannon up precipitous cliffs. Worth was all the time on horseback, riding from post to post, and using every effort to cheer his men in their laborious duties. His conduct is mentioned by the commander in terms of the warmest approbation.

Worth was one of the commissioners at the negotiations for the capitulation, and performed efficient service during the evacuation of the city. He was subsequently detached to Saltillo, where he remained until January, at which time he marched for the Gulf coast to join General Scott.

At Vera Cruz, General Worth was the first officer that formed his troops in line after their landing. His services in the siege were valuable; and he was the head of the American deputation to arrange the terms of capitulation. When the Mexicans had left the city, Worth was appointed governor, and occupied it with his brigade. His prompt and exact measures soon resuscitated the trade and commerce of the city, and repressed the disorders which had long disgraced it.

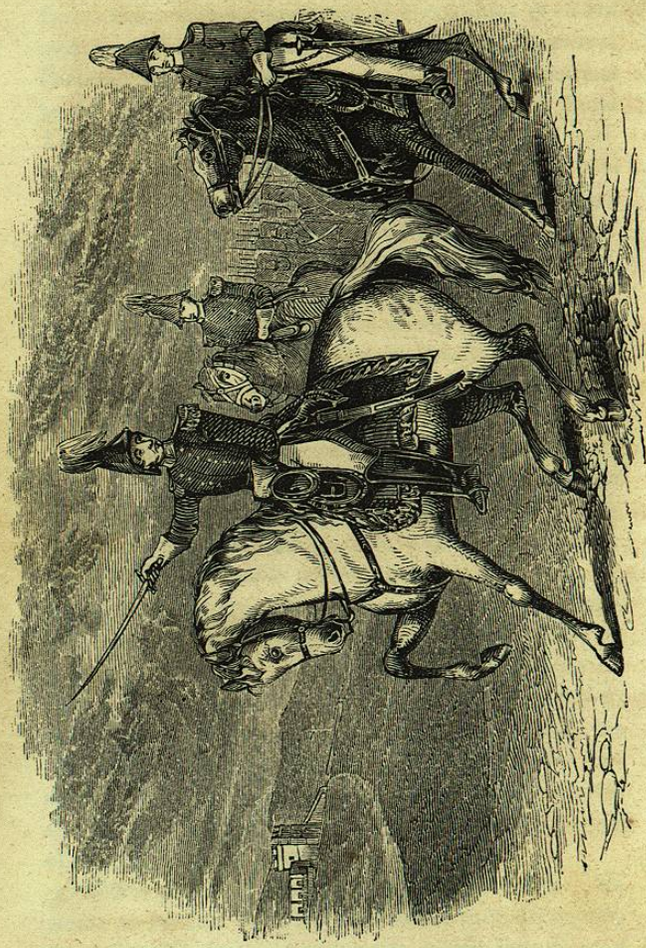
On the same day that the battle of Sierra Gordo was fought, Worth took unresisted possession of the town and fortress of Perote, in which were found immense stores of ammunition, cannon, mortars, and small arms. This is one of the strongest castles in Mexico. Here he remained for some time, principally engaged in perfecting the discipline of his army. The movements of Santa Anna called him from his retirement, and after the battle of Sierra Gordo he was very active in cutting off supplies from the Mexican camp. Early in May he advanced toward Puebla, and on the 14th he was met by

Santa Anna with a detachment of about three thousand men, most of them cavalry. A skirmish ensued, several Mexicans were unhorsed, and the whole force returned to the city. The next morning, before daylight, Santa Anna left for the interior, and at 10 o'clock the Americans obtained quiet possession. The city of Puebla is well built, ornamented with numerous public buildings, and contains eighty thousand inhabitants.

This has proved the last military achievement of General Worth. The same inaction which a paucity of troops imposes on all the other officers of the Mexican war, is shared by him; and until this is obviated, we have little reason to suppose that we will have occasion to crown him with *fresh* laurels.

General Worth possesses a tall, commanding figure, a full front, and is said to be the best horseman, and handsomest man in the army. In discipline he is very rigid, but is a universal favorite with the soldiers, by whom his appearance is always cheered. His great attachment to General Taylor has been the subject of frequent remark; and when the commander was called to part with so many of his officers, prior to the battle of Buena Vista, with no one was he more loth to part than with Worth. The General never appears with his troops except on horseback, and he seems perfectly conscious of his skill in riding. On such occasions he forms a most singular contrast to his brother officer, who is one of the most awkward equestrians in Mexico.

Worth possesses fine talents other than military. He seems to be one of those who are born to distinguish themselves in any occupation into which fortune may



General Worth at the Siege of Monterey—Bishop's Palace in the distance.

throw them. He is a firm friend, an agreeable companion, and possesses a sort of chivalric frankness and kindness of heart, which, notwithstanding his strict discipline, endear him to the whole army.

GENERAL WORTH AT MONTEREY.

Few who saw General Worth march toward the Bishop's Palace, on the morning of the 20th, ever expected to see him return. He had missed Palo Alto and Resaca Palma; and his feelings were known to be sad and chafed at the late unfortunate differences between himself and government. It was well understood that General Taylor had given him the responsibility of a separate command mainly out of delicacy to his misfortunes; and all supposed that he would establish his reputation as a general, by pushing forward, through uproar, confusion, and death, to the cannon's mouth. As the brave fellows filed by their comrades, many a pitying glance was cast upon them, and many a brave heart ached as it sighed forth an involuntary farewell. The General was silent. He appreciated the magnanimity of his brother veteran, and burned to prove that it was not misplaced; but no doubt thoughts were then crowding upon his mind which were never permitted to pass the lips, and he knew and felt that something dearer than life was resting upon the possibility of capturing a seemingly impregnable fortress.