

exertion were beginning to tell upon the men, when a dragoon—his horse covered with mud and foam—came dashing to the rear, to inform us that the firing was from one of the Mexican forts upon General Taylor and the Texan troops, who had ventured within range of the enemy's guns.

This intelligence allowed a most welcome halt, after which the march was renewed and finished at a more comfortable pace. The road, as we approached the city, had been much broken up by the enemy, and in some places flooded by the damming of little streams that crossed it, so that the soldiers were again compelled to push the wagons through the mire. The army encamped in the beautiful grove of Santo Domingo, two miles from Monterey. A slight elevation, about midway concealed the city from our view. This delightful camping-ground was erroneously called, by the letter-writers, "the *Walnut Springs*." The grove contains perhaps more than one hundred acres, and is composed chiefly of live oak and pecan trees, whose spreading boughs are thickly covered with the funereal drapery of Spanish moss. It is watered by many clear, gushing springs, the moisture of which has probably caused the remarkable growth of forest trees, so uncommon in that country. The shade and water it afforded, made it a charming spot—just the place, indeed, in which to refresh a travel-worn army for battle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE reconnoissance.—Beautiful view of the city and valley of Monterey.—Description of the fortifications.—Worth's division sent to seize the Saltillo road, and attack the western defenses.—Skirmish with the Mexican cavalry.—The action of San Jeronimo.—Divisions of Twiggs and Butler advanced on the north.—Attack of Garland's column upon the north-east corner of the city.—Its result.—Advance of Quitman's brigade.—The Teneria captured.—The 1st Ohio regiment enters the town.—Its operations.—Charge of lancers.—The repulse.—Loss and gain of our army on the 21st of September.—View of Worth's operations on the 21st and 22d.—The heights are stormed, and the castle carried.—The Mexicans retire upon their second line during the night of the 22d.—Street fights on the 23d.—The capitulation of the 24th.—Taylor's letter vindicating it.—Ampudia's proclamation.

THE city of Monterey derives its name from the Conde de Monterey, one of the earlier Spanish viceroys of Mexico. It is the capital of the State of Nueva Leon, and the most beautiful city in the northern section of the republic. Say the Mexican historians of the war*—"The houses of Monterey are sufficiently handsome. Buildings of hewn stone, streets regularly intersecting, specious plazas, and a cathedral of magnificent architecture. A river, clear as crystal, flows on one side of the city, on whose borders there are romantic rural cottages, and gardens with thick foliage. The city from its origin had enjoyed repose; even the civil revolutions had many times spared it, sacred to the frontier. After the misfortunes on the Rio Bravo, the whirlwind of war menaced it closely, and the inhabitants anticipated the grievous and mournful conflict." Situated in a fertile valley, in the midst

* "Notes of the War," p. 65.

of lofty and picturesque mountains, nature has invested it with many charms, and blessed it with that mild, dry, and salubrious climate, common to elevated intertropical locations. The city is said to contain a population of twelve thousand. It exhibits no evidences of prosperity, and is chiefly supported by the wealthy landholders of the department, who from social or political considerations have established their residences within its enchanting precincts. It has no manufactures, and but few shops. The bustle of business is seldom seen, the noise of mechanics' tools rarely heard within its walls. Indeed, the modern Mexicans seem to be scarcely superior to the semi-civilized aborigines, in their knowledge of the useful or decorative arts. And, judging from the aspect of the country traversed in our march, they are not even as well instructed in agriculture as those mysterious and most interesting races who formerly possessed the land.

As previously stated, the army encamped before Monterey on Saturday, the 19th of September. During that day, and most of the next, our engineers were engaged in reconnoitering the city. So completely were its batteries, and the whole town, masked by luxuriant gardens and embowering trees, that but little information concerning its defenses could be obtained, though the reconnoissance was wonderfully extensive, at least one fifth of the inquisitive volunteers assisting in it. At the enlivening suggestion of a friend—"ye living men come view the ground, where you must shortly lie"—a few of us, soon after our arrival, had ridden down to the hill midway between the camp and city, and were surprised to find a great number of our soldiers already there. Some of

them were strolling far down the slope toward the citadel, which, being situated just outside the northern suburb, was the only fortification distinctly visible. In the general desire to see that as yet unseen biped, a Mexican soldier, they had escaped from the camp, unarmed, and under various pretenses. The conduct of these men must have been no less surprising to the enemy, who were perhaps prevented from making a sally by the fear of some stratagem or ambushade. In the event of a sudden onset of Lancers, the rash stragglers, defenseless and on foot, would have been slaughtered to a man.*

Of course the Texan brigade was numerously represented in such an adventurous assembly, but the Rangers, being mounted on fleet horses, could in any emergency have retreated safely to the camp. Like boys at play on the first frail ice with which winter has commenced to bridge their favorite stream, those fearless horsemen, in a spirit of boastful rivalry, vied with each other in approaching the very edge of danger. Riding singly and rapidly, they swept

* The thoughtless rashness of these men elicited the following order from headquarters.

Orders
No. 121.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.
Camp before Monterey, September 20, 1853.

The commanding general finds it necessary to condemn the practice which prevails, of small, unarmed parties, and even individuals, straying from the limits of the camp. No persons, except officers, or armed parties conducted by officers, will be suffered to pass the exterior guards, and the several commanders will give the necessary orders to secure an observance of this regulation. An infantry picket will be thrown out from the 1st division upon the Monterey road, at a distance of half a mile, whose duty it shall be to arrest all persons who may be found in that direction violating this order.

By order of Major General TAYLOR,

W. W. S. BLISS,
Assistant Adjutant General.

around the plain under the walls, each one in a wider and more perilous circle than his predecessor. Their proximity occasionally provoked the enemy's fire, but the Mexicans might as well have attempted to bring down skimming swallows as those racing dare-devils. While the marvelous ring performances of that interesting equestrian troupe were in progress, the artillerists of the citadel amused themselves by shooting at the spectators on the hill. But the volunteers kept one eye at least upon the fort, and wisely *scattered* whenever they saw the flash and smoke rise from its battlements. The distance of the battery from the elevation on which we were, about 1300 yards, afforded sufficient time for a change of position before the balls fell hissing to the earth, generally upon the spot where a group of men had been standing. The excellence of the enemy's guns, and the skill with which they were served, were the subjects of mingled admiration and regret.

From the position we occupied, a magnificent prospect met our gaze. In the verdant valley before us, lay the beautiful capital of New Leon, sparkling like a gem in the bright beams of the evening sun. The houses of Monterey, covered with a hard, white stucco that glistened like polished marble, were seen in glimpses through the acacia and orange trees of the suburbs.

"Amid the shade of trees its dwellings rose,
Their level roofs with turrets set around,
And battlements all burnished white, which shone
Like silver in the sunshine."

In the rear or south side of the city, and at no great distance from it, was the Sierra Madre chain, while on the

east and west rose those remarkable mountains heretofore described, now seen from base to summit in all their grand proportions. As we looked upon the refulgent and beautiful city, reposing in the green valley, its charms coquettishly heightened by their partial concealment in the fragrant foliage of the gardens, the lofty and insolated Saddle and Miter mountains, along whose sides floated many golden clouds, like ships drifting upon a lazy tide, the whole scene was in such striking contrast to the country over which we had recently passed, that we seemed to have arrived at the very gates of Paradise. A paradise, alas! too soon to be converted into a Pandemonium. But with the roar of a hostile battery in our ears, we did not regard that lovely landscape with the calm delight of pacific and pleasure-seeking tourists. The imposing yet beautiful aspect of the city awaiting the combat, was viewed with feelings rather akin to those with which the keen huntsman, after a long and fatiguing pursuit, suddenly confronts some much-prized and formidable foe, at bay in its mountain lair. Its rare beauty and unexpected strength kindles anew the waning enthusiasm of the chase, and causes him "to hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit," for the inevitable and doubtful struggle.

Linked in the memory with our first view of Monterey, is one of those sublime and fleeting aerial scenes, by which the heavens are often made to declare the glory of God and the firmament to show his handiwork, and whose surpassing grandeur appeals to "every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord." There is a deep and romantic mountain gorge west of the city, through which passes the road to Saltillo,

and the interior of Mexico.* As we lingered upon the hill to survey the dangerous charms of our fascinating foe, we beheld a dense cloud far up the pass, rolling rapidly down, like an Alpine torrent, toward the city. It completely filled the gorge, and concealed in its massive folds every crag and shrub as it advanced. It differed from the wonderful cloud we had observed with so much interest at Camargo, especially in the ominous silence attending its progress. Both were presented to our gaze about the same hour of the day, but that seen at Camargo, approaching us from the east, was brightened and adorned by the rays of the setting sun, while this, coming from the west, frowned darkly and fearfully upon us. As it advanced, it continued to rise and spread until it occupied the whole of the narrow valley through which it moved. The slanting rays of light from the west, piercing its thin, upper folds, formed a foam-like crest upon the cloud cataract. It was a mute and magnificent representation of Niagara. The resemblance was more perfect when the cloud, reaching the mouth of the pass, encountered a strong current of air flowing parallel with the Sierra Madre, which, while holding it firmly within its mountain banks, whirled in wild eddies the heavy vapor at its base, and scattered into mist the more elevated and projecting portions of the mass. Like some mighty host suddenly and impetuously assailed when marching in close column through a narrow defile, the broken

* Through this gorge, which widens into the pretty little valley of Santa Catalina, is the only practicable route for wagons and artillery to be found in the whole range of the Sierra Madre. There is another pass through the rocky rampart, many leagues to the eastward, leading to Tula de Tamaulipas, but it is rough and precipitous—merely a bridle path.

and tumultuous cloud, unable to extend its front, was dispersed as rapidly as it advanced. In this splendid spectacle, this combat of the elements, the deities of the air had imparted to us a practical lesson in the art of war.

Having loitered around the city until the glimmering landscape faded from the sight, we galloped back to camp. It was a pleasant night, and I did not regret that duty called me to watch through its witching hours. A solemn stillness pervaded the camp, when, soon after our return, I set out to visit the guard. Many of the men, whose tents had been lost on the march, were stretched in sleep beneath the umbrageous trees, dreaming, perhaps, of the kindred and country some of them were never more to see. A few individuals wrapped in their blankets were sitting or standing, silent and alone, their minds, it may be, occupied with dazzling and ambitious hopes of distinction, or obscured by gloomy presentiments of the coming strife. As I groped my way among the many obstructions which then filled the grove, I came upon a party of officers who were discussing in low and earnest tones, the rumored result of the first reconnoissance. In a brief conversation with them, I discovered that they were all greatly disappointed in the strength of the city, and anticipated a sanguinary conflict. One of them, a thorough soldier, asserted that any attempt to take the place without a battering train, would be to convert the army into a forlorn hope. But dark as the prospect was, all had evidently determined to triumph or die, and in passing the canteen, united in the sentiment, that a victory worthy of our arms and country might be gained at Monterey. The volunteers

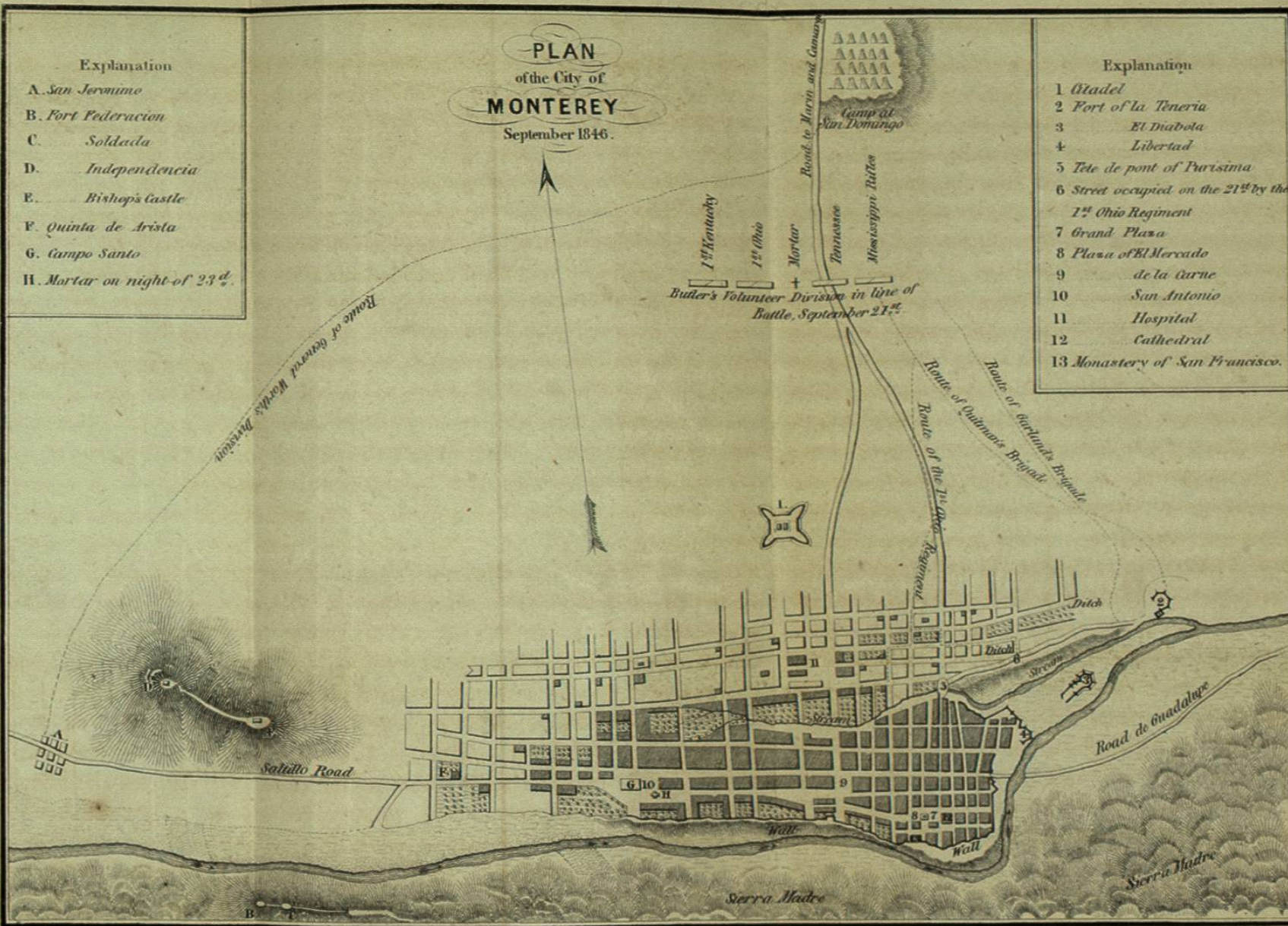
being generally inexperienced in military affairs, yet having blind confidence in their Chief, had no idea that the means in our possession were considered inadequate to the easy accomplishment of the object in view, and I believe that most of them would gladly have stormed at any hour.

But belligerent as man is said to be by nature, and anxious as all were to participate in that most interesting of great events, a battle, yet, probably, there were but few persons in the army who could regard with indifference such a trial as was then at hand. Officers high in rank, or occupying those fortunate positions which secure for them a favorable mention in the official reports, may see bright rewards glittering in the dark and dangerous future. In their ears, the weird sisters may whisper mystic promises of the Presidency, the Senate, and Foreign Missions. But *life* is their stake also, and considering the responsibilities as well as the rewards attending rank and station, it is doubtful whether their minds are as much at ease on the eve of battle, as those of the nameless soldiers, abused in the particular, and applauded in the aggregate, who are destined to die unwept, or live unhonored. To all ranks, particularly to us raw volunteers, the proximity of our enemy, and the certainty of combat, was strangely exciting. How anxiously did the mind at that hour contemplate the future! How busy, too, was memory with the past! How ineffably pleasing to the aroused senses were all the works of nature then! For ourselves we would confess, that when emerging from the shadow of the wood, we entered the open, moonlight plain in which the guard was stationed, the earth and its, "majestical

PLAN
of the City of
MONTEREY
September 1846.

- Explanation
- A. San Jeronimo
 - B. Fort Pederacion
 - C. Soldada
 - D. Independencia
 - E. Bishop's Castle
 - F. Quinta de Arista
 - G. Campo Santo
 - H. Mortar on night of 23^d.

- Explanation
- 1 Citadel
 - 2 Fort of la Teneria
 - 3 El Diabola
 - 4 Libertad
 - 5 Tete de pont of Purisima
 - 6 Street occupied on the 21st by the 1st Ohio Regiment
 - 7 Grand Plaza
 - 8 Plaza of El Mercado
 - 9 de la carne
 - 10 San Antonio
 - 11 Hospital
 - 12 Cathedral
 - 13 Monastery of San Francisco.



roof, fretted with golden fire," seemed more beautiful than ever before.

"The balmiest sigh

Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,

Were discord to the speaking quietude

That wrapt the moveless scene."

The scene was, in truth, divinely calm and fair. Even the stern sentinels yielded to its influence, and like the radiant orbs above them, moved in solemn silence through the night. The large force assembled at the guard-station was unusually quiet, and while the men stood leaning on their arms, ready for any emergency, the thoughts of many had doubtless flown through that pure, serene, effulgent air, back over the wild and thirsty plains of the *tierra caliente*, across the wide and trackless Gulf, and up the great "Father of Waters," to the loved ones at home. From that happy communion, they returned to inspire many a watch-worn and weary soldier with courage and mercy.

The Mexicans, disinclined to night operations, permitted the hours to steal quietly on. Before morning had "dappled the drowsy east," or the *reveille* had pierced the sleeper's ear, the army was stirring; the blazing breakfast-fires dissipated the darkness of the grand old grove, and, though no orders for battle had been issued, the camp began to resound with the din of preparation. Soon the music of the distant church-bells floated sweetly and peacefully to our ears. These familiar sounds, it must be admitted, alone reminded some of us that it was the Sabbath; for the fourth commandment, and indeed almost every other not contained in the "Army Regulations," and "Orders of the Day," seemed to be gener-

ally ignored. Two Catholic priests were attached to our army, but what part they were instructed to perform in the campaign is, to the writer at least, unknown. *Quien sabe?* Certainly they never, perhaps for lack of encouragement, observed the divine injunction declared by the Prophet whom the Lord knew face to face—"And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people." If, as some believed, their appointment was designed by the government as a master-stroke of policy, it deserves to rank with the admission of Santa Anna to the blockaded port of Vera Cruz. But whatever may have been the motives of the Cabinet in the matter, the worthy ecclesiastics were well received by the army, and treated with due respect by the commanding general, who, unlike the Constable de Bourbon, had no fear that men would say—"Taylor is turned driveler, and rides to war in company with monks."*

At an early hour on the 20th, (Sunday,) I had occasion to visit head-quarters, where I found the General sitting before his tent, as "calm as a summer's morning." I learned soon afterward that an attack would probably not be made that day, and that the engineers under the direction of the gallant and accomplished Mansfield, were again busied with the reconnoissance. The position of affairs at that period, as will readily be seen, was well calculated to inspire the commander-in-chief with the most painful anxiety. No one,

* The reverend gentlemen alluded to, were Fathers McElroy and Rey. The former, I believe, remained at Matamoros, but the latter marched with us to Monterey, and was murdered by the Mexicans soon after the capture of the city.

however, who observed the cheerful manner and determined mien with which he received his officers that morning, could suppose that the usual serenity of his strong mind was in the least disturbed. On the bold spirit of Taylor, difficulties operated rather as incentives than discouragements to action. Doubtless, as at Palo Alto, he had resolved to fight the enemy, whenever, wherever, and in whatever numbers he found him. His officers and soldiers were not slow to participate in his courageous impulses and resolute spirit; they, "beholding him, pluck comfort from his looks." But few doubted the issue of the approaching conflict. Situated as was our army, hundreds of miles from reinforcements, with a powerful enemy in front, a barren and hostile country in rear, it became absolutely necessary to beat Ampudia, and take Monterey, cost what it might, and so, "out of this nettle, danger, to cull the flower, safety." Why, after Congress had voted ample means to prosecute the war, our armies in Mexico were so often placed in those fearful straits, from which their deliverance appeared to be almost miraculous, is a question that has frequently excited the attention and astonishment of the American people. The Executive department of the government being of course responsible for the conduct of the war, and the proper application of the men and money granted for its prosecution, has not escaped censure; but a more charitable explanation of the matter, may perhaps be found in the great extent of the line of military operations, the difficulty of obtaining transportation, and the unceasing and wasting inroads of disease. However, many perplexing obstacles might have been avoided, and many

lives saved, had the prudent counsels of Winfield Scott, heretofore alluded to, been heeded by the Cabinet.

In order that the reader may have a better understanding of the battle of Monterey, it will be well, before entering on its description, to take a general survey of the fortifications of the enemy, of the position and strength of many of which we were not apprised until we received their fire in the progress of the engagement. The outline of the city, as will be seen from the accompanying map, is nearly that of a parallelogram, the longest sides being on the north and south. The only elevated ground in its immediate vicinity that could be made serviceable in its defense, was the steep and bare hill of the *Obispado*, rising from the western suburbs, and upon which the Bishop's Castle and Fort Independence were situated. Between this hill and a spur of the Sierra Madre, about six hundred yards to the south of it, and which was crowned by the two forts *Federacion* and *Soldada*, runs the river and road from the *Saltillo* pass. The elevation between our camp and the city, already mentioned, could scarcely be termed a *hill*. It was merely a low swell of the plain, within good battering distance of the town, however. On this elevation our Mortar Battery, (save the mark!) was planted. This formidable battery consisted of a single ten inch concern, which looked more like some old witch's soup pot, than one of those—

"Mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit."

It proved perfectly useless in that position, and our old gray-haired chief of artillery, on observing how far short of the

city the first shell exploded, gave it a contemptuous kick which almost sent it from the platform.

The fortifications of the exterior line on the north were, first, *the citadel*. It was a remarkably strong work, occupying an area of two hundred and seventy yards square, and inclosing an unfinished church, which, in its solidity, like most others in Mexico, showed a military as well as a religious design. Indeed, the churches have been almost as conspicuous in the wars of modern Mexico, as were the "teocalles," pyramidal temples of the aborigines, in the Spanish invasion. This fortress, standing just on the edge of the plain, commanded every approach to the northern suburbs, which, thinly covered with humble dwellings, environed by luxuriant gardens, stretched from east to west the whole length of the city. Lofty hedges, and rows of fruit trees divided these suburban squares, whose dense foliage served to screen numerous parties of lurking sharpshooters. A small stream flows between the city and this suburb. The *Marin* road, upon which we advanced, and which is the principal thoroughfare from the north, crosses this stream, and at once enters the city by the bridge of the *Purissima*, a substantial stone structure, defended by artillery and infantry. All the streets leading in the same direction were barricaded at the stream, down to the edge of which the city is compactly built. To turn these works, therefore, flanked by massive stone houses, full of troops, was out of the question. And no prudent officer, advised of their strength and position, would assault them until he had probed in vain for a more vulnerable point in the enemy's

exterior line. Such were the defenses on the north side of the city.

On the west were, *the Bishop's Castle*, situated about midway up the rugged slope of the hill of the Obispado, *Fort Independencia*, crowning its summit, and forts *Federacion* and *Soldada*, on a spur of the Sierra Madre, south of the Saltillo road. These fortifications, with the citadel, were the only military works observable from the plain. Naturally strong, and occupied by the enemy in considerable force, they seemed impregnable, and the troops selected to storm them were generally regarded as *enfants perdus*.*

On the south and east, the walls of the city are washed by a broad and rapid river, which flows from distant and almost inaccessible ravines of the Sierra Madre. Its high and precipitous banks were defended by the redoubts, *La Teneria*, *Diabolo*, *Libertad*, with other smaller batteries, all so connected by houses and fleches of masonry, as to form a continuous line of defense on those two sides. In addition to these works of the first, or exterior line, commanding all the approaches to the city, there was a vast number of interior street fortifications. Every square was defended by barricades, some ten or twelve feet in thickness, and many of

* These heights were, however, carried by General Worth's division, with such trifling loss, that many persons, supposing it the weakest point in the enemy's defenses, have suggested that our whole army should have attacked on the west. But it was (naturally at least) the strongest section of the Mexican line, and its cheap conquest is alike due to the admirable strategy of Worth, and to the extraordinary diversion, made in aid of his operations, by the ardent troops under Taylor, on the opposite side of the city. Had the whole American army been thrown upon the enemy's western defenses, it must be considered that, instead of meeting the garrisons only of the forts stormed by Worth, it would certainly have encountered Ampudia's entire force on the Obispado hill.

them having embrasures for guns, while the flat roofs, surrounded by high and massive parapets, made each house a fortress. At least ten thousand troops, regulars and citizen auxiliaries, with fifty pieces of artillery, held the town, the entire population of which was animated by a spirit of determined hostility. They were fighting, as they believed, for all that could nerve men to the most desperate resistance.

For the reduction of the city, thus fortified and defended, General Taylor had about six thousand men of all arms. Unfortunately he had no artillery suitable for a siege. With the aid of a half dozen heavy guns, it is believed that we could have taken Monterey in half the time, and with a tenth of the lives it eventually cost us.

The following is a list of the corps comprising the Six Thousand. But few of them had more than half their complement of men, and some had even less.

First Division—GENERAL TWIGGS.

3d Brigade, { 2d Dragoons,
Commanded by { Ridgely's Battery,
Lt. Col. Garland. { 3d Infantry,
 { 4th Infantry.

4th Brigade, { Bragg's battery,
Commanded by { 1st Infantry,
Lt. Col. Wilson. { Baltimore Battalion.

Second Division—GENERAL WORTH.

1st Brigade, { Duncan's battery,
Commanded by { Artillery battalion, (serving as infantry)
Major Staniford. { 8th Infantry.