

the weak side of this wretched garrison, but we must fight and crush them ;" and the roll of drums, and peal of bugles on the fresh morning air summoned the scattered army to action. With tumultuous haste, the skeleton regiments hurried through the town, and, about nine o'clock, formed in long, thin lines upon the Plains of Abrahams, without waiting for artillery, except two small field-pieces brought from the city. This was Montcalm's great and fatal mistake. Had he remained behind the ramparts of Quebec, he could probably have held out till the approach of winter would compel the retreat of the British. Including militia and regulars, the French numbered seven thousand five hundred famine-wasted and disheartened men, more than



OLD ST. JOHN'S GATE.

half of whom were, in the words of Wolfe, "a disorderly peasantry." Opposed to them were less than five thousand* veteran troops, eager for the fray, and strong in their confidence in their beloved general.

Wolfe passed rapidly along the line, cheering his men, and exhorting them not to fire without orders. Firm as a wall, they awaited the onset of the French. In silence they filled the ghastly gaps made in their ranks by the fire of the foe. Not for a moment wavered the steady line. Not a trigger was pulled till the enemy arrived within forty yards. Then, at Wolfe's ring-

*The exact number was 4,828. That of the French is estimated at 7,520.