

styled "The Guard of Honour of the Mexican Congress," of which the general was captain, a colonel the lieutenant, and so on. Colonel Young, an officer who had distinguished himself in the service of the United States, and whose gallantry and activity we shall have occasion hereafter to notice, was subsequently placed in command of this company. The numbers of the expedition being few, this arrangement was made, both with the view to self-defence, and to keep the officers united; the general intending to transfer them to other corps, as they acquired a knowledge of the Spanish language, in which the chaplain of the division commenced instructing them. In fact, all the measures of the general clearly proved that he perfectly knew how to order his little force to the best advantage. The following was the organization of the corps:—

*Guard of Honour*—Colonel Young.

*Artillery*—Colonel Myers.

*Cavalry*—Colonel the Count de Ruuth.

*First Regiment of the Line*—Major Sardá.

*Engineer*

*Commissariat* } Departments.

*Medical*

*Blacksmiths, Carpenters, Printers, and*

*Tailors.*

The infant army was daily exercised, and the greatest good order prevailed.

The general had frequent interviews with Commodore Aury, and was very desirous of establishing a cordial understanding with him. Unfortunately, this was not effected; and thereby Mina lost an important accession to his force, as the commodore had actually raised a body of two hundred troops, for the purpose of invading the province of Texas.

Aury held a commission in the service of the Mexican republic, as governor of the province of Texas, and general in the Mexican republican army. This commission had been granted him by *Don José Manuel de Herrera*, who resided in New Orleans, as ambassador to the United States from the Mexican republic. Herrera had been appointed by the Mexican Congress, at the period when there volution was in its most flourishing state; when General Morelos, the distinguished patriot chief, had taken Acapulco, subdued the province of Oaxaca, and established his authority over a considerable part of the Mexican empire. The right, therefore, of Herrera to appoint Aury an officer in the Mexican republic, cannot be questioned.

Herrera was a priest, grave in his manners;



but he possessed very little knowledge of the world, and consequently was easily imposed on. During his stay at New Orleans, he rendered no effectual services to the Mexican cause, except by some trifling shipments of arms and munitions of war, which he sent to General Victoria.

Previous to General Mina's sailing from Baltimore, a fast-sailing schooner had been despatched for the Mexican coast, to ascertain the situation of affairs, and to open a communication with General Victoria, who, it was understood, had a considerable patriot force under his orders, in the province of Vera Cruz, and held a small fort on the coast, at a place called *Boquilla de Piedras*. This mission was entrusted to Doctor Mier, a native of the internal provinces, and in whom the general placed great confidence.

The doctor, however, was alarmed at the stormy weather he experienced in the gulf, and put into New Orleans: from thence he despatched the schooner for Boquilla. On her arrival there, the captain found that the post was in the hands of the royalists, and he repaired to Galvezton. Information was afterwards received, that Victoria had taken a port to the northward of Boquilla, called Nautla. The

schooner was despatched for the latter place, with letters from Mina for Victoria; but, in the mean time, the place had been retaken, and on her arrival the captain found the Spanish flag flying.

Mina deeply regretted that he could not open a communication with Victoria, because he was perfectly aware of his merits, and felt the importance of acting in concert with him. If Mina could have formed a junction with Victoria, and safely landed the arms and munitions of war which he had then at his command, it would have opened a new era in the revolution; he could then have penetrated through the province of Vera Cruz to Tehuacan, formed a union with the forces of Teran, Osourno, and the other patriot chiefs, and, in all human probability, would have been able to strike a decisive blow against the royalists. The non-execution of this part of Mina's plans may be assigned as one of the causes of the eventual failure of his undertaking.

Doctor Mier, hearing of the general's arrival at Galvezton, left New Orleans, and repaired to that place. The doctor was a man of most amiable manners; and, although he had been educated a priest, was liberal in his sentiments, a good scholar, and an ardent advocate for the



emancipation of his country from the despotism of Spain. He was not, however, calculated to ride in the whirlwind of a revolution, being naturally timid; but, from his general knowledge of New Spain, and his influence in society, the general calculated much on his services, and was sincerely attached to him.

The doctor had been one of the victims of Spanish bigotry, in consequence of having delivered a discourse, in the city of Mexico, in which he undertook to prove that the famous story of the *Virgin of Guadalupe* was an imposture of the priesthood. For this act of free thinking and speaking, he was shut up for several years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and was afterwards sent to Rome. There, by his talents, and the urbanity of his manners, he became a favourite with the Pope. Upon the breaking out of the revolution in Spain, he went there, and preached destruction to its invaders; but, being a zealous constitutionalist, he was forced to take refuge in England. There he met Mina, and most cordially engaged to accompany him to Mexico.

Having mentioned the apparition of the *Virgin of Guadalupe*, and as it is one among the numerous evidences of the superstition which has so long prevailed in Spanish America,

it may not be amiss to give some detail of the origin of this apparition. We know, from authentic records, that the superstitious terrors instilled by the Spanish priests into the minds of the ignorant aborigines, were, at the commencement of the conquest, of much more service to the government of Spain than its arms. The images and pictures of saints, which the priests had previously buried, or hidden in places where they might easily be found by the Indians, are at this day to be seen in almost every village and town in the empire. The discovery of those images is ascribed to the interposition of heaven. Every town has its tutelar saint, upon which are lavished immense sums of money, in dresses, gold and silver ornaments, diamonds, and other precious stones. To all of these the Padres have given names, and to each one is attributed miraculous powers by the credulous Indians, and indeed by many bigoted Creoles. The holy tribunal has most studiously cherished this superstition, and has hurled its thunders against him who dared to question the sacred origin of these images. It would fill volumes, were we to attempt to detail the astonishing circumstances attending these discoveries, and the miraculous virtues ascribed to each saint. They have been



transmitted from one generation to another, and have received so many embellishments and confirmations from the crafty and credulous (the latter of whom imagine, that the surest way of propitiating the favour, is to magnify the powers of the saint), that even some of the priests of better judgment have been led to believe in those wonderful attributes, and are ready to testify to miracles performed by virtue of their prayers and supplications. It is true, that many of the crafty priests are aware of the deception; but, nevertheless, they find it expedient to compose books for the express purpose of proving the time and manner in which those great miracles have been performed; and in so doing, they conceive, that not only their own interests are promoted, but that it is the most effectual mode of preserving the power of the church, and the dignity of the Spanish monarchy. Books of the kind just mentioned form almost the only species of literature that is allowed to circulate through the empire. They are sought after with avidity by the unfortunate Creole, and make an impression on his mind not easily eradicated.

About ten years after what the Spaniards call the Conquest, the celebrated apparition of the

Virgin of Guadalupe made its appearance, in the following manner. Adjacent to the city of Mexico is a barren hill; an Indian, accidentally passing near it, heard sounds of music, and at the same time saw an aerial figure. Alarmed at the vision, he fled; but, passing near the same place shortly afterwards, the same strange occurrence again took place. He was called by name, and told to repair to that spot at a certain time, and he would find her picture buried under a heap of roses. He did so, and found it as was said. The Indian carried this mysterious picture to the bishop of Mexico, who was, of course, in the secret. A solemn conclave of the clergy took place; and the bishop, kneeling before the picture with the most profound veneration, named it *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*. A sanctuary was erected for her reception, and she received the exalted title of Patroness of Mexico, which she enjoys to the present time. This is the origin of the Virgin of Guadalupe, conformably to the records of the church now existing in Mexico. The original picture is still exhibited in the Virgin's church; it is painted upon a cloth of linen manufacture, called *Uangochi*, composed of coarse threads spun from the fibres of the Maguey (*Agave Americana*), and woven very



widely apart. The Indians and Creoles say, the picture is miraculous, because, as it is approached, the painting becomes less visible, and when quite close, all traces of the picture disappear; their blind superstition not permitting them to discover, that the open texture of the material upon which it is painted is the cause of this disappearance. A priest told the author another circumstance respecting the Virgin's picture, which he deemed the most important part of the miracle; it is, that the picture was found under a heap of roses, in the winter season, and on a spot where those flowers had never bloomed. It did not occur to the priest, that at the distance of a few leagues the climate is quite different, and roses there grow throughout the year; and that, consequently, the painters of the picture of the virgin did not require celestial aid to procure any quantity of roses. In such veneration do the lower orders of Creoles, and indeed many of the middling and higher classes, and the Indians, hold their patroness, that they keep paintings of her in all their houses, invoke her in all their prayers, and implore her assistance in all their difficulties.

In the religious processions which take place in the Mexican empire, almost daily, for the

purpose of celebrating some rites of the church, or to offer homage to some of the tutelar saints, there is a solemnity and magnificence displayed, admirably calculated to captivate the vulgar, to gratify the vanity, and impose on the credulity of all classes of the community. The simplicity and purity of the Christian religion is lost in these pompous and mystical exhibitions. The poor converted Indian, as he is called, knows nothing of the Catholic religion beyond its ceremonies. To the images of saints, and other external symbols, he offers his daily homage, but he is as utterly uninformed of the precepts of the Christian doctrine, as any of the Pagans of former ages.

In order to accommodate the Catholic religion to the prejudices and consciences of the Indians, the priests, with their usual art, have interwoven many of the Indian customs and symbols with Christian ceremonies. Of this strange mixture of Pagan and Christian rites, there are, to this day, numerous evidences throughout the Mexican empire. On various holidays, the Indians of both sexes, dressed in the most fantastic manner, dance to the sound of rude instruments before the church doors, and in front of the altar, exhibiting the most ludicrous figures. During the parade of many



religious processions through the streets, we see Indians, decorated in the most grotesque manner, beating drums, dancing, and cracking fireworks. In the churches, we are struck by the glaring paintings and images of martyrs, saints, and bishops, surrounded by suns, moons, and stars; while the trinkets, precious stones, gold and silver ornaments, and the twinkling of numbers of wax tapers, induce a stranger to believe, that he is in one of the fairy edifices of Aladdin, instead of a temple dedicated to the Christian worship. In a conspicuous situation, in the wall of the cathedral church of the city of Mexico, is placed a huge, misshapen stone, on which are engraved hieroglyphic characters, that had formerly been appropriated to the religious ceremonies of the aborigines. In the painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Mexican patroness is represented in a blue robe embellished with stars, and standing on a crescent supported by cherubim. Even the complexion of the virgin has been suited to the spirit of the times, in order to prove to the Indians that her apparition was a mark of the especial favour of Heaven. If, therefore, she had been represented with a fair complexion, the intent might not have been answered; and, for this reason, perhaps, we see her represented with features of a "dusky hue."

To support these pompous ceremonies, or, as it is styled, to maintain the splendour and dignity of the church, the unfortunate Mexican is taught to believe, constitutes his primary duty; hence, the greatest part of the fruits of his hard labour are absorbed by the ecclesiastic coffers.

The wealth that has been lavished on some of the religious edifices, will appear incredible to those who have never visited Spanish America. From the numerous instances which every where present themselves in Mexico, we select the following.

About three leagues from the town of *San Miguel el Grande*, in the province of Guanaxuato, stand two chapels, on the summit of a high mountain; one, for ordinary divine offices, the other, to exhibit the different scenes, in the sufferings of our Redeemer, previous to and on his arrival at Mount Calvary. In this chapel was a magnificent altar, on which were the images of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and other saints, made of solid silver, ornamented with emeralds and other precious stones. On entering this chapel, on the left hand, the stranger is astonished on beholding a range of *thirty-two altars*, on each of which are figures, the size of life, representing the different passages in our Saviour's ordeal; and at the end,



Mount Calvary, with the body on the cross, accompanied by Mary, John, and others, mentioned in Holy Writ. All these altars, figures, crosses, &c. are of pure silver. This temple is called the sanctuary of our *Lord of Atonilco*, from the name of the place where it is situated. Devotees from all parts of the kingdom go there to confess, and conform to the penance prescribed by the priests; and large sums are annually collected by our Lord of Atonilco, from these devout pilgrims.

The origin of this chapel merits notice from its singularity. Many years ago, a bandit of the name of *Lohra*, was at the head of such a formidable band, that the Spanish government offered him not only a pardon, but an immense salary, with the arbitrary power and title of supreme judge of the *accordada*, provided he would exterminate the banditti. *Lohra* accepted the offer; seized his fellow robbers, and, under various pretexts, hung them up by hundreds on the trees; so that in a few months he completely destroyed them. He was immediately invested with the character of supreme judge, and enjoyed with it a salary of ten thousand dollars a year, until his death. This office was one of the most arbitrary and independent situations in the kingdom. He had the power of life and

death, inflicting what punishment he pleased, and levying contributions on all such as were found trafficking in liquors prohibited by the Spanish government.

*Lohra* no sooner found himself clothed with this extraordinary power, than he began to levy contributions without mercy on all whom he suspected of dealing in contraband liquors; and in case any one resisted his decrees, he was immediately hung. By such means he amassed immense treasures, which he devoted to building the sanctuary of our Lord of Atonilco.

His successors continued long to enjoy those high prerogatives; but they became so capricious and cruel, that about the year 1790, the viceroy, Count Galvez, took on himself the responsibility of putting a check on the tyrannical tribunal of the *accordada*. A man of the name of Santa Maria was then judge, and had three culprits at the foot of the gallows ready for execution, when Count Galvez suddenly presented himself on horseback, and pronounced their pardon in the name of the king. This act was highly grateful to the people of Mexico; and Charles III. approved the conduct of Count Galvez, directing that, in future, all sentences of the judge of the *accordada* should be subject to the revision of the royal audiencia, of which the viceroy is president.



In having noticed thus briefly the superstitious follies and extravagance which have been encouraged among the Mexicans by the Spanish priests, we do not mean to speak lightly of the Catholic religion; it is the abuses which have been sanctioned under its name that we reprobate, and think a proper subject for animadversion. We have no prejudices against any particular denomination of Christians; but we have deeply to regret, that many other sects, as well as the Catholics, have sullied the purity of true religion, by mingling with it a mass of ceremonies, revolting to common sense, and disgusting to every enlightened mind. We will now resume the thread of our narrative.

The brig returned to Galvezton from New Orleans, well equipped, and was now put under Mexican colours, as a national vessel of war: she was called *El Congreso Mexicano*.

The general received despatches from his agent at New Orleans, containing overtures from certain persons, who wished him to make an attack upon Pensacola, and who offered to furnish him with men, arms, &c. &c. for that purpose. Mina was anxious to examine into the merits of this project, conceiving that if it could be carried into effect, it might promote

his ulterior views on Mexico. Accordingly, he embarked in the brig, and proceeded to New Orleans, leaving Colonel Don Mariano Montilla, an officer who had distinguished himself in the Venezuelan revolution, in the command of the division at Galvezton.

Previous to the general's departure, a very extraordinary circumstance was brought to light, which threw on the Spanish government the odium of having attempted to get rid of Mina, by the treachery of one of his associates, a young Spaniard named Correa. This individual was under deep obligations to the general. He was the son of Diego Correa, who then resided in London, and who had been a conspicuous victim of the despotism of Ferdinand. Young Correa arrived in London from the continent, totally destitute of the means of subsistence; and, on expressing to the friends of Mina a wish to follow that officer, he was by them fitted out in a handsome style, his expenses and passage to the United States were paid, and a letter of credit on New York was furnished him. He arrived at that city, and then proceeded to Baltimore to meet the general, who received him with that generous sympathy, which he invariably manifested toward the sufferers by Ferdinand's tyranny. The