

crew of the Cleopatra got into the boats, and pushed for the shore. As it was impossible for the seamen to resist so powerful an enemy, all hands abandoned the stores, took to the boats, and came up to Soto la Marina with the intelligence. Captain Hooper, however, remained with his boat a short way up the river, from whence he could distinctly observe the conduct of the Spanish marine.

The Ellen Tooker immediately made sail, and, as the Spaniards say, escaped by superior sailing. The Cleopatra had nothing whatever on board, except a cat, which the sailors, in their hurry, had forgotten to carry with them. The vessel had not the semblance of any thing warlike; she was quite light, had bright sides, and was without quarters. While the schooners were in chase of the Ellen Tooker, the frigate acted with *commendable* caution. She came down with great care upon the unfortunate Cleopatra, and after pouring *two broadsides* into her, finding she made no return, they ventured to board and take possession of her. Encouraged by this dash, they manned the boats of the squadron (the schooners having returned from the chase), for the purpose of landing, and either carrying off or destroying the stores on the beach. After pulling near the mouth of

the river, these valiant fellows took fright at the sight of the tents pitched by the sailors. The appearance of them probably excited an apprehension that a party was in waiting; they, therefore, thought it most prudent to abandon this perilous attempt, and to content themselves with the victory achieved over the empty ship. They accordingly returned to their respective vessels, and soon afterwards, having put two guns from the frigate on board the prize, the whole squadron made sail. The ship, however, was so much shattered by the unmerciful cannonading she had sustained, as to be rendered unseaworthy, and, after being in possession of the enemy a short time, they burnt her.

On returning to Vera Cruz, these heroes boasted of their bravery in having destroyed *two* vessels, one a *ship of war*, alluding to the Neptune, which, it will be recollected, had been previously broken up by order of the general; and they alleged as a reason for not destroying the stores ashore, that the surf ran too high. The true reason we have before conjectured; for the surf certainly was no obstacle. The stores had been safely landed when it had been equally great, and the crew of the ship had that very morning experienced no difficulty from it.

The victory over the rebel Mina, at Soto la

Marina, was celebrated at Vera Cruz, on the return of the frigate La Sabina, by a solemn Te Deum. Despatches were transmitted to the city of Mexico, which were afterwards published in the Mexican Gazette, announcing that Mina's expedition was totally destroyed, and a *number* of prisoners taken. In consequence of this signal victory, a general promotion took place; and the midshipman, who fearlessly boarded the Cleopatra, was appointed a lieutenant. We shall have occasion, in the course of this work, to notice other exaggerations and palpable falsehoods, which the Spanish government have been in the habit of publishing in the course of this revolution; indeed, how could it be otherwise, when there is only a solitary newspaper in the whole kingdom, and that one under the vigilant control of a despotic government?

Mina heard of the arrival of the squadron off the river, and of the capture of the vessels, with the greatest composure. He at once concluded, that the enemy would not only destroy the stores, but would co-operate with Arredondo. The general therefore ordered a detachment, with a field-piece, down the river, to observe the movements of the enemy; but Captain Hooper soon after coming up, his account

of the affair converted the alarm of the garrison into a scene of merriment, at the expense of their valiant antagonists.

The fort was by this time in a state of completion. Four carronades from the fleet, the field-pieces and howitzers, were mounted. Two eleven and a half inch mortars, a considerable quantity of ammunition, and part of the Neptune's cargo, were brought up. Cattle were killed, and their flesh jerked; such corn as could be procured in the vicinity was brought in; and the place was put in as good a state of defence, as the time and circumstances would permit.

As General Arredondo had commenced his march from Monterey, and was advancing upon the garrison with a body of two thousand men and seventeen pieces of artillery (being the united force of the eastern internal provinces), Mina made the necessary dispositions for his intended march into the interior. He encamped the part of the division with which he was to perform the undertaking, on the right bank of the river, about a league distant from Soto la Marina, where it remained a few days.

Colonel Perry had for some time given strong evidences of discontent. He had frequently declared an opinion, that the division was too weak to be of any service to the patriots, and

that he anticipated its annihilation. It was afterwards supposed, that he had long meditated the scheme which he now put into execution. Taking advantage of the absence of the general and Colonel Young from the encampment, he harangued his soldiers, and informed them of his intention of separating from Mina, and returning to the United States; he represented to them the very great perils into which they were about to be drawn, and urged them to retreat while an opportunity presented itself. By these means he prevailed on fifty-one of his soldiers, including Major Gordon, and the rest of his officers, with one of the Guard of Honour, to accompany him. They marched in the direction of Matagorda, at which place he expected to meet with a number of boats sufficient to convey his party within the line of demarcation, between the United States and the Spanish possessions.

The colonel's conduct caused both surprise and regret; for although he had occasionally manifested some caprice and discontent, yet no one supposed it possible that he could abandon the cause in the hour of danger; and indeed his conduct on this occasion is still very mysterious. Besides, to march with such a handful of men along the sea-coast, where he knew that

water, particularly at that season of the year, was very scarce, and when the enemy, it was presumable, would oppose his progress, was an act of palpable rashness.

It was subsequently ascertained from the best Mexican authorities, that the colonel did actually penetrate to within a short distance of his destined point, after several skirmishes with the royal troops, in which success attended him. Flushed with these victories, he determined on attacking a fortified position near Matagorda, which might have been left in his rear, as the garrison did not evince the least disposition to annoy him. He had summoned the commandant to surrender, who was deliberating on the propriety of so doing, at the moment when a party of two hundred cavalry made its appearance. A refusal to the summons was the consequence. The garrison sallied out, and a severe action commenced, in which Perry and his men displayed the most determined valour. They continued combating against this superiority of force till every man was killed, except Perry. Finding himself the only survivor, and determined not to be made a prisoner, he presented a pistol to his head, and terminated his existence. Thus perished a brave but rash man; and with him fell some valuable officers and men.

Colonel Perry had been in the United States' service, and was at the memorable battle of New Orleans. He embarked in the cause of Mexico, and was attached to the division that invaded Texas, under Don José Bernardo Gutiérrez. He was under the command of Toledo, in the attack made on the Spanish troops commanded by Arredondo, in advance of San Antonio de Bejar, on the 18th of August, 1813. In that disastrous affair the colonel behaved with his usual courage, but narrowly escaped with his life. His sufferings from fatigue and privations were extreme, before he again reached the United States.

The desertion of Colonel Perry, with so great a number of valuable men, was a most severe blow to Mina; but it did not daunt his resolute mind. Major Stirling, who had been in the service of the United States, was appointed to the command of the regiment of the Union, and other officers were nominated in lieu of those who had deserted.

Arredondo having by this time advanced to the vicinity of Soto la Marina, the general made his final arrangements at the fort; leaving, for its garrison, detachments of the Guard of Honour, artillery, first regiment of the line, engineers, medical and commissariat departments,

mechanics, &c. with the sailors of the destroyed vessels, under Captain Hooper, and some recruits. The whole, amounting to about one hundred men, were placed under the command of Major Don José Sardá. The general instructed the major to hold out to the last; assuring him, that he would return in a short time, and compel the enemy to raise the siege, should they attempt to form one during his absence.

On the 24th of May, the division commenced its march. It was composed of the following troops:—

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| General and staff | 11 |
| Guard of Honour, Colonel Young | 31 |
| Cavalry, hussars and dragoons, Major } Maylefer | 124 |
| Regiment of the Union, Major Stirling . . | 56 |
| First regiment of the line, Captain Travino | 64 |
| Artillery soldiers | 5 |
| Officers' servants, armed | 12 |
| Ordinanzas of the staff | 5 |
| <hr/> Total | 308* |

* This was not the actual strength of the division, when it first marched. A change also took place in the corps. Some of the officers of the Guard of Honour were transferred, on the march, to other corps. During the first

When the march was commenced, the enemy was only a few leagues distant; and therefore the utmost secrecy, and rapid movements, became necessary, in order to elude him. The following day, the guide conducted the division through an Indian path, over hills covered with dense woods, which, in many places, it became necessary to re-open. It traversed thickets, which had not, perhaps, for many years previously, been penetrated. This day's march was long, commencing at sun-rise; and the troops suffered for want of water; for until sun-set, when the division emerged from the thickets, it had been exposed to a burning sun, without either breeze or water to refresh them. Some water was found at the edge of the entangled forest; and, after a few minutes' halt, the march was resumed, and continued till midnight, when the general, with the cavalry, advanced to an hacienda. Mina took with him the guide, and the division was in consequence obliged to

twelve days of its progress, several recruits offered themselves; and, as a few stand of arms and some clothing were carried along with the division, they were enrolled with the cavalry, or the first regiment. In addition to the above, there were several muleteers. To avoid a prolix detail, the writer has at once stated the greatest strength of the division.

halt; but it remained under arms, and at day-light again moved on, arriving about noon at the hacienda, fatigued and hungry.

Beef was here served out; but the necessary article of bread, from the difficulty of preparing it,* could not possibly be procured; and the

* The bread consumed by the Mexicans generally, but particularly by the country people, is made of Indian corn, and by a process unknown elsewhere. The quantity of corn, necessary for the daily consumption of the family, is put to steep, over night, in a large earthen vessel, in hot water, mixed with lime. This softens the husk, and in the morning it is ready for the next step in the process; but the taste of the corn, and the greatest part of its substance, is extracted by this preparation. It is then ground up, with much labour, between two flat stones, called by the Indians *a metate*; and afterwards formed, by beating it between the hands, into cakes, about eight or ten inches in diameter, and about one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness. They are then placed on an earthen heater, or griddle (*comal*), and baked. These cakes they call *tortillas*. The preparation of them is entirely performed by women; and, if the family be large, it requires four or five to perform this duty. The art of making *tortillas* is considered of great importance by the natives; and its excellency consists in grinding the grain till it becomes white, making the cakes thin, and, above all, in keeping the table supplied with a succession of hot ones during the meals. The Indian, when about to marry, is particularly careful to select for his bride one who understands this art; perfection in it being considered by them as the acme of female accomplishments. From the preceding description, it will

troops were under the necessity of eating meat alone. This was the general fare the road afforded, for the remainder of the march, and that only once in twenty-four hours. Although the whole of the troops were mounted, yet their progress was tedious and slow, as the horses were soon broken down by continual and long marches. The sufferings of the troops, from the want of good provisions, the tediousness of the marches under a broiling sun, and frequently many hours without water, together with other causes, were almost incredible; but, as it is not the intention of the writer to swell the narrative with a prolix statement of personal hardships, although it was one continued series of privations, he will restrict himself to the mention of such only as he conceives to be essential to the history.

The general, by making the rapid and secret march of the two preceding days, not only eluded the enemy, but calculated on being able

be perceived, that to make tortillas, in the small ranchos, for upwards of three hundred soldiers, would have required more time than could have been spared for the purpose; and therefore it rarely happened that the troops were supplied with this important article of food. In the towns and large villages, however, abundance of wheaten bread can always be procured.

to surprise some of the rich refugees from Soto la Marina, who, he learned, were at this hacienda, which was distant from that place, by the route taken by the division, twenty-five leagues. He presumed they would be lulled into security, as they conceived it was impossible for him to advance by the high road, without their receiving timely advice. In fact, the mission was completely surprised; but Mina found there only some priests, and the wife of Don Ramon de la Mora, the proprietor of Palo Alto. A part of the property which had been taken by Colonel Perry, was found deposited there; and, as it consisted of articles essential to the comfort and wants of the troops, the general ordered them to be distributed among his men.

From this place the division moved forward the next morning. Nothing material occurred, until its arrival at the town of Horcasitas, situated on the bank of the river Altamira. The river was fordable by one very dangerous pass only; and, in the crossing, one officer, Lieutenant Gabet, was swept away, with his horse, and drowned. About noon, on the following day, the troops reached a hacienda, on the opposite bank of the river, about five leagues down the stream, where a halt was made for the day. From this place a party was despatched

to bring in a herd of seven hundred horses, which had been collected, in the vicinity of this place, for the use of the enemy's troops. The horses were driven in: they were a most important acquisition to Mina, while their loss was severely felt by the enemy. The following afternoon, Mina continued his progress, having mounted his troops on the best of the horses, the remainder being driven in the rear of the division. But, a few nights afterwards, nearly the whole of these animals were lost, while the division was ascending, in great darkness, a thickly wooded mountain, by a very narrow and bad road. The general was now advancing upon the town of El Valle de Maiz. Mina's late movements had kept the royalists in a state of continual alarm. The enemy were at a loss to ascertain the point upon which they were directed; and, as both Altamira and Tampico were threatened by turns, the enemy were obliged to remain in these positions, to protect them. As soon, however, as he advanced from Horcasitas upon El Valle de Maiz, a strong body of troops was put in motion to pursue him. To these, the capture of the *cavallada* (herd of horses) just mentioned was a grievous event.

Just as the division was about to march, on

the morning of the 8th of June, a peasant arrived, with the intelligence that the enemy from El Valle de Maiz, about four hundred strong, all cavalry, had taken post in advance of the town, and were determined to make a bold stand there.

This news raised the spirits of the little band, who continued the march, anxious to come in contact with the enemy. It was soon perceived, from various articles of provisions scattered along the road, that the enemy had changed his resolution, and had retreated: the track of wheels also denoted that he had cannon. It appeared, however, that he again determined to make a stand; for, about noon, the division came upon the enemy, whose force consisted of nearly two hundred cavalry, advantageously posted on an eminence on the high road, three leagues from El Valle de Maiz.

The satisfaction manifested by the division, convinced Mina that he could rely on their conduct; and he immediately made dispositions for the attack. The infantry were dismounted; and the best marksmen from the Guard of Honour, and regiment of the Union, were selected to act as light troops. These, fourteen in number, were directed to enter a thicket, on which the enemy's left rested, and to dislodge