

the kingdom in the cause of its emancipation. If Mina, after this action, had had with him one thousand, instead of a hundred and fifty foreigners, he might have marched direct upon the capital of Mexico, and the royalist troops, instead of opposing him, would have flocked to his banners.

The battle of Peotillos incontestibly proves the quality and character of the royalist troops, and shews what a few determined foreigners can achieve against them at the point of the bayonet. This is not the only action which can be adduced in support of this assertion. That of Colonel Perry, near Soto la Marina, and that of El Valle de Maiz, already noticed, and those of Pinos and San Juan de los Llanos, yet to be mentioned, were all gained over a superiority of numbers; and it will be seen in the sequel, that Mina's division was cut up by the enormous force of five thousand men, whose efforts even then would have been unavailing, if their success had depended entirely upon their personal prowess. If these are not sufficient proofs of the awful fall of the Spaniards from their once lofty elevation in the records of military fame, let the reader revert to the history of their struggle against the Emperor Napoleon, and there he will find, that in

the central provinces of Spain, the French, with one-third their numbers, gained victories, and drove them from point to point, even after their armies were organized and disciplined.

The sanguinary style in which the order of the day, found as before-mentioned, was couched, roused the indignation of the division against its author. It expressly forbade quarter, and so sure was Armíñan of the victory, which his great superiority of numbers well authorized him to expect, that he exulted in having at length got the traitor Mina and his rabble (*gavilla*) into his power, not one of whom, the order said, should escape. It modestly pointed out the description of the plunder which was to belong to the king, and that which was to be distributed among his troops, whom it strictly enjoined not to stop the work of extermination, to plunder, but to wait till after the slaughter was finished, when a division of the spoils should be made. The Great Disposer of human events had ordained, that matters should not correspond with the savage principles and predictions of Colonel Armíñan. On the contrary, he received a merited punishment for his intended cruelties, by having his host put to flight by *one tenth* of its numbers. Armíñan, with his staff, fled several leagues from the

field of battle, before he deemed it safe to halt. His despatch to the commander of San Luis Potosi, was published in the Gazette of Mexico, and is a tolerably fair sample of all the royalist despatches, which have appeared in that paper during the revolution. It is a composition of so much absurdity, and is so palpably false, that the Spanish officers yet treat it with merited ridicule, and never touch upon the subject but with disgust. It is very brief, and sets out with saying, that he had encountered a column of men *determined to die killing*: he states, that *his cavalry took fright at something, and ran over his infantry, which threw them into disorder*; but that he *gained the battle*, and that he *only wanted two hundred more cavalry*, which he requested might be sent him, *to finish the total destruction of Mina*. He concludes this singular despatch, by saying, "*No hay mas papel*," "*I am out of paper*;" else, we presume, he would have communicated, for the information of the Mexican people, a few more falsehoods.

During the action, a trumpeter was made prisoner by a major of the enemy's cavalry. The major immediately forced him to dismount, and then gave him his carabine to carry. The trumpeter soon ascertained that it was loaded,

and when he found that the enemy's troops were in a state of confusion, he suddenly presented the carabine at the major, and peremptorily ordered him to dismount; he did so, and the trumpeter jumping into the saddle, ordered the major to march before him, observing to him, "As you are obliged to walk, sir, I'll not trouble you to carry the gun. So much pleased was the major with the manner in which he was treated, that, although Mina gave him his liberty, he subsequently joined a division of the patriots.

As the people of the hacienda had retired on the approach of the division, no emissary could be despatched, to obtain information of the enemy's situation. Mina knew, that ignorance of his force could not have been the cause of his signal victory, for the enemy had various opportunities of ascertaining it to a man; besides, they had taken one of the division prisoner the preceding evening, from whom they had undoubtedly gained every information. He therefore expected, that, feeling ashamed at having been beaten by so contemptible a number, they would make a desperate attempt to retrieve the disasters of Peotillos, and it was accordingly judged best to steal a march on the enemy. The division was, therefore, put in

light marching order, and the superfluous baggage was destroyed, to make room for the conveyance of the arms and ammunition taken from the enemy.

It has already been noticed, that some of the wounded of the enemy had been removed from the field, with those belonging to the division. Their wounds were dressed, and the same sympathy was extended to them as to those of Mina. The surgeon reported, that four of the division were so dangerously wounded, that it was impossible to remove them, and with reluctance the general was obliged to leave them. He, however, left a letter for the royalist commander, begging that he would pay the same attention to them, as had been shewn to his own wounded. The parting with these brave fellows was extremely painful. They shook the general and their companions cordially by the hand, and wished them success, while bidding them, as they conceived, an eternal adieu. We have great pleasure in recording the fact, which we afterwards learned, that Mina's request was most scrupulously fulfilled; they were removed by order of the royalist commander to San Luis Potosi, and were there treated in the most humane manner, particularly by the inhabitants.

Every thing being arranged, at two o'clock on the morning of the 16th, the division moved forward, and continued advancing till noon, when it arrived at a rancho. Here, intelligence was received of the complete defeat of the enemy; and, as the fear of pursuit from that quarter was now at an end, the division took up its quarters for the night. As the rancho afforded every thing necessary for their refreshment, the troops fared sumptuously.

The next morning, the march was resumed: but two officers, from some motive which could not be developed, remained in the rancho; they afterwards fell into the hands of the enemy. At sun-set, the division passed through the pueblo of *Hideonda*. Its priest ordered the bells to be rung, and gave other apparent demonstrations of joy, to celebrate, as he said, the result of the battle. He endeavoured to persuade the general that he was warmly attached to the patriotic cause: but his conduct, it afterwards appeared, was guided by the most profound dissimulation; his real object being to get rid of Mina in the safest way possible, and to obtain an exact account of his numbers. He afterwards boasted to the royalists, that he had counted Mina's troops as they remained formed in the square.

It should not be inferred, however, from this instance of hypocrisy, that the clergy are averse, in general, to the cause of liberty, excepting that portion of them which first drew their breath in Spain. It is true, that the European priests, from interest and prejudice, have been, and ever will be, hostile to the independence of the New World; but the sweeping imputations which have been cast on the Spanish *American* clergy, are without the least foundation. To accuse the Creole priests of a want of *amor patriæ*, and an attachment to the interests of the Spanish government, could only arise from a total ignorance of their real character and situation. There is no part of the Mexican population which has more ample cause to desire, or in secret does more ardently pant after, a change of government, than its native clergy. The church preferments are regulated in an equally odious manner with the civil and military. No Creole, whatever claims he may have on the score of family, or however great his talents may be, can ever aspire to the mitre. The subordinate livings only are filled by Creoles; rare indeed are the instances of native divines attaining to any situation beyond that of a *cura* (rector of a parish), and even the most valuable of these livings are presented to old

Spaniards. Inequality of fortune among the clergy is here even more striking than among the other classes; and no country presents such contrasts of wealth and poverty, luxury and misery, as Mexico. While a large proportion of the curas suffer extreme poverty (many depending for subsistence entirely on the charity of their parishioners), the canons and bishops, and even some of the curas, roll in affluence and luxury. The Creole, once placed in a *curato*, lives and dies there unnoticed, unregarded; while he has the mortification to see daily arrivals from Spain of the refuse of the Spanish convents, who are destined to succeed to, and invariably monopolize, the clerical dignities and wealth.

The Mexican clergy are far less numerous than is generally supposed. According to a late enlightened traveller, M. de Humboldt, the secular clergy and regulars who wear the cowl do not exceed ten, and, including the lower orders attached to the convents, fourteen thousand; being about three for every thousand inhabitants. The kingdom is divided into one archbishopric and eight bishoprics. The revolution has materially reduced their incomes; but, prior to that event, the dignitaries received the following immense annual revenues:—

	Dollars
Archbishop of Mexico	130,000
Bishop of La Puebla	110,000
————— Valladolid	100,000
————— Guadalaxara	90,000
————— Durango	35,000
————— Monterey	30,000
————— Yucatan	20,000
————— Oaxaca	18,000
————— Sonora	6,000

The canons receive from seven to nine thousand dollars, and the sub-canons, from two to four thousand dollars, each.

The revenue of the church was derived principally from tithes. Its lands were in value about two and a half millions of dollars; and it held mortgages to an immense amount, about forty millions of dollars.

When it is considered, that these immense sums flow into the coffers of a comparatively few individuals, of whom by far the greater proportion are old Spaniards, to the exclusion of the natives of the country, can it be for a moment supposed, or is it consistent with human nature, that a class of men, of which the majority are so degraded, and so abused, should uphold, from sentiments of attachment to the *Madre Patria*, a government which thus op-

presses them? It is true, they have great power over their flocks, which they do not fail to exercise; but, as that dreadful engine of despotism, the Inquisition, has hitherto hung over their heads, and the civil government possesses all the physical force, which is always called forth in its aid, they are awed into subjection, and fear alone compels them to act a part, at which they would otherwise spurn. Were the clergy properly supported, they would soon convince the world that they are really patriots, and that the charges against them are foul aspersions.

In taking a retrospective view of their conduct, we find that the plan to drive despotism from Mexico was laid by *priests*; the father of the revolution (Hidalgo) was a *priest*. From the commencement, *priests* have held the first rank in the patriot armies: such were Morelos, Matamoros, and an infinite number of other distinguished members of the church. Those just mentioned, beside several hundreds of *priests*, have fallen victims, during the struggle for liberty; and there are yet many of the clergy acting with the revolutionists, in the intendancies of Mexico, Guanaxuato, and Valladolid.

The next day's march brought the division to a very extensive hacienda, called *Espiritu Santo*. Being on the frontiers of the provinces

possessed by the patriots, and open to their incursions, the hacienda was fortified, and a garrison had been maintained at the owner's expense: but, not deeming it prudent to withstand an attack from the force which now approached, they had retreated to San Luis, having the proprietor, an European Spaniard, under their convoy. The majority of the male inhabitants had been compelled to depart; but the division was met, at the entrance of the hacienda, by a troop of females, bearing a picture of the Virgin, and chaunting hymns. Fearing the worst from victorious troops, and judging what would be the conduct of Mina, by what they had experienced from others in the same situation, they adopted this method; hoping, by the intercession of their tutelar saint, to awaken the compassion of the conqueror, and to obtain that clemency which was seldom extended to them. Their fears soon subsided; and, to their very great surprise, the soldiers, instead of plundering them, as had been customary with the contending parties, paid for whatever they required. The division bivouacked without the hacienda; rations were provided; and the next morning it moved forward.

By a forced march, the division reached the *Real de Pinos* at sun-set. The term *Real im-*

plies a place where mines are worked. This town is in the intendency of *Zacatecas*; is extensive and wealthy; and is situated on an ascent, partly surrounded by hills, out of which the precious minerals are extracted. It was fortified; being defended, on the hill side, by a very wide and deep trench, which was raked from breast-works built on the tops of the houses. On the side next the plain, the streets leading to the *Plaza Mayor* (principal square) were blocked up by a wall, calculated only to afford protection against musquetry, constructed with loop-holes, and strengthened by ditches. These would be unavailing against organized troops, as the heights completely command the place within musquet-shot. It had, however, been once invested by a body of fifteen hundred patriots, and had resisted their attacks.

At the time Mina appeared before Pinos, it contained a garrison of three hundred men. He summoned it to surrender, promising that respect should be paid to persons and property, and threatening the consequences that awaited its reduction by force. A refusal to this summons was returned; and Mina, thereupon, made preparations for storming the place. Soon after dark, parties were despatched to the different points of attack; and a smart

skirmishing was maintained on both sides, but without causing any loss to Mina. A little before midnight, a detachment of fifteen men from the Union was ordered up to reenforce a party of the first regiment. At that point, the houses were low, and afforded a communication from their terraces with the Plaza Mayor, extending some distance into the rear of the enemy's works. The small party of fifteen men, anxious to distinguish themselves, immediately mounted the terraces, and unobserved, as the night was dark, proceeded along them in silence. Arrived at the square, they lowered themselves down by their blankets; where, by the light of the torches of the enemy, they saw the reserve under arms, with five pieces of artillery: they advanced upon them, as long as they could do so unperceived, then gave their usual three cheers, and rushed on the enemy with the bayonet. They were completely surprised, and, each one seeking his own safety in flight, abandoned the place without farther resistance. Thus Pinos was carried, with the loss of one man. As the place had refused to surrender on honourable terms, and as it was taken by storm, Mina, in conformity with the laws of war, gave it up to be plundered; but, at the same time, charged the troops not to commit any act of personal

violence. Large sums in specie were found by the troops, many of whom obtained more treasure than they could find means to carry away. They amply supplied themselves with clothing, which they much needed; few leaving the place without a richly embroidered cloak thrown over the shoulders, worth from one to two hundred dollars, and in many instances far more costly. A considerable magazine of military stores was also found here.

One of the soldiers of the Union regiment had entered a church, and was detected in the act of purloining the golden ornaments belonging to the altar. The general had always given the most positive orders to his troops, to respect all places dedicated to divine worship; and had declared his firm determination to punish with death whoever was found committing any act of sacrilege. On a former occasion, at Soto la Marina, he had caused a Creole to be shot, for breaking into a church at Palo Alto. He therefore, on being informed of the circumstance, immediately directed the soldier to be taken out to the front of the division, and there shot: thus proving to the royalists, that the men whom they called heretics, and whom they had represented to the people as sacrilegious plunderers, paid more respect to the sanctuaries of religion than themselves; for the royalist troops,