

The next circumstance we select, displays all the cruelty and savage ferocity of a barbarian. The people of the Baxio are noted as being more attached to the revolution, than any other part of the Mexican empire. Aversion to, as well as fear of the royalists, impelled the male inhabitants, who could do so, to abandon their houses, and fly to the mountains, whenever they made their appearance. Padre Torres directed his march with some troops to an ill-fated hacienda, called Guanimaro, not far from Penjamo. The people, perceiving the approach of soldiery, fled to a hill close by the hacienda. On entering, the Padre broke forth into a torrent of abuse, because they had run away from him, for so he misconstrued their good intentions. He ordered them to return; formed them in the environs of the hacienda, and decimated them on the spot. The victims of his wanton barbarity were immediately confessed, and, unmoved by their entreaties or solemn adjurations that it was dread and horror alone for the enemy that caused them to flee, turning a deaf ear to the supplications of their wives, children, and relatives, he ordered them to be shot, in the presence of their friends and kindred.

We have been thus particular in drawing the character of Padre Torres, because in the se-

quel it will be seen, that the conduct of this man towards the brave Mina was the sole cause, notwithstanding all the obstacles he had to contend against, that he did not succeed in his enterprise.

The soldiery over whom the sway of Torres and his satellites extended, were hardy and courageous. Their numbers were at least seven thousand; and, though not all armed with musquets, yet they were expert lancers and excellent horsemen. They were, however, entirely destitute of discipline, were under no command, miserably paid and clothed, without union, each man living at his own home, and scattered over the comandancia. They were the servants of their masters the commandants, and had been so long brought up to irregularity, that they could desert and fly from a field of action with impunity. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they were no longer able to cope with their antagonists, whose only superiority consisted in remaining united on the field. In point of personal courage and the quality of their horses, the royalists were far inferior; nor had they any good cavalry, until it was formed from the insurgents themselves. When disciplined and taught to fight with order, the patriots invariably defeated their antagonists.



It must be recollected, notwithstanding this unfavourable picture of the patriot chiefs generally, that some few, although their conduct had its faults, were actuated by love of country: innate depravity had not, as with the majority, an influence over their actions.

The peasantry gave the most unequivocal proofs of attachment to the patriot cause; for, ill-treated, abused, and sacrificed, as they were by the patriots, as well as by the royalists, they continued faithful to the republican standard.

Torres, in order to exhibit the appearance of having a civil government, instituted one after the model of the late Congress. It was composed of a president, *Don Ignacio Ayala*, two members, *Don Mariano Tercera*, and *Dr. Don José San Martín*, and a secretary of war, *Don Francisco Loxero*. They were, however, the mere creatures of Torres, acting in conformity to his wishes, and in fact, instead of controlling his operations, they strengthened his power over the people. Although the government issued decrees, yet they were obeyed or disregarded, as suited the caprice or interest of Torres and the commandants, who attended solely to his mandates.

The new Congress bestowed on Torres the rank of lieutenant-general, and commander-in-chief of all the forces of the Mexican

republic. The royalists, at that time, had garrisoned all the principal towns; but the patriots still had control over the country, even to the very walls. They were scattered in guerilla parties, principally cavalry, consisting of from fifty to a thousand men; and their excursions extended from the *Sierra Gorda*, to the shores of the Pacific ocean. In reality, they were little better than bodies of banditti. When they knew of the approach of a division of the royalists, they fled to impregnable stations in the mountains, and there waited until the enemy retired; then, descending to the plains, they renewed the same scenes of drunkenness, gambling, and crimes of every description.

The royalists were not idle spectators of these disorders, nor of the distracted condition of the patriots, but daily improved the advantages they offered.

Such was the state of the Mexican revolution, when Mina arrived at the fort of Sombrero. The disasters we have related, were then only partially communicated to him; and he still fondly indulged the hope, that it was practicable to remedy the evils which the revolutionists had suffered. He flattered himself, that the gallant officers he had brought with him, as well as the soldiers of his little band,



would, by their influence and example, infuse new ardour into the patriots, promote their union, and enable him to strike a decisive blow against the royalists.

The patriots still retained possession of three forts; those of *Sombrero*; *Los Remedios*, about sixty miles off; and *Jauxilla*, at an equal distance from Remedios, where the Congress held their sittings.

There likewise remained among the patriots a few men of distinguished character, who, notwithstanding they had become disgusted with the outrageous conduct of the revolutionists, yet entertained so implacable a hatred to the Spaniards, that they preferred seeking an abode in the forest, to accepting the royal pardon. Among these men was *Don José Maria Liceaga*, the president of the Congress at Apatzingan, who signed the constitution. But none of these worthy men now retained any command or influence: education, talent, and pure patriotism, were proscribed, under such men as Torres and his party.

Among the military commandants who then acted under Torres, there were few capable of reading or writing. They usually employed a secretary, on whom devolved the duty of reading and answering despatches. When an im-

portant paper was to be signed, the commandant impressed it with a seal, bearing his name, and ornamented with some rude insignia.

It was with men of this character that the unfortunate Mina was destined to co-operate. He beheld around him nothing but gross ignorance and anarchy, which threatened to render all his efforts ineffectual. Disappointed and mortified, he yet concealed his chagrin, except to a few of his confidential officers. He had anticipated a different scene; and, although he never had calculated on finding the revolutionary forces under military discipline, or with skilful officers, yet he had portrayed them in his mind as enthusiasts in the cause of liberty, and had always understood that they were a brave and hardy race of people. During his recent march from the coast to Sombrero, he had received the most positive proofs of the innate courage of the Creoles; and was, therefore, still flattered with the hope that it would be in his power to succeed in emancipating Mexico. He considered his junction with the patriots, even under all the disadvantages in which he found them placed, as the first great step to his future glory and success; and, however extravagant such calculations may at present appear, it is evident to the mind of



the author, that if Torres, and the rest of the patriot chiefs under his orders, had sacrificed their private views to their country's cause, and magnanimously and cordially co-operated with Mina, appointing him commander-in-chief, he would have found a superabundance of men and resources, not only to have checked the progress of the royalists, but to have given to the revolution a brighter aspect than it had borne at any previous time, since the commencement of the struggle.

It is well known to the writer, that, at the period we are speaking of, nearly every regiment of European and Creole troops, in the city of Mexico, and in the middle provinces, was suspected of disaffection, and of a disposition to revolt. Could Mina have maintained his position for a few months after he had effected his junction with the patriots, there is every moral probability that a general defection would have occurred. Murmurings and desertions were becoming so common among the Spanish troops, particularly in the regiment of Zaragoza, that the government was in the greatest state of alarm. Its existence actually depended on arresting the progress of Mina towards the middle provinces; and thus, on the co-operation of Torres and his party with Mina,

depended the fate of the royal government in Mexico.

It will likewise be obvious to the reader, how different would have been Mina's situation, had he arrived twelve, or even nine months earlier on the Mexican coast, and formed a junction with such commanders as Victoria and Teran, instead of the jealous and depraved Torres. Then, indeed, would the hero of Navarre have gained new laurels, and the cause of liberty have been triumphant. But let us pursue the train of events, in the order they occurred, subsequent to the arrival of Mina at fort Sombrero.