

him I do not like; envy is stamped on his countenance; we must beware of him; he will deceive us; depend upon it, he is inimical to our gallant chief." Alas! these prophetic hints were too soon verified by the conduct of Torres.

The head-quarters of Torres at Remedios, were in the heart of a country extremely productive of grain of every description. The inhabitants, almost without exception, were devoted to the patriotic cause, and were ever ready and able to furnish any supplies of provisions required by Torres.

The country round the base of Sombrero, had been more or less laid waste, and was thinly cultivated; and as Mina intended to establish his head-quarters at this fort, until he could raise and equip a considerable body of troops, he was of course obliged to depend on the good management and promises of Torres, to supply him with all the necessary provisions. But in order not to put Torres to any inconvenience, and to obtain supplies with celerity, he handed over to him *eight thousand dollars*, to be appropriated for the immediate victualing of Sombrero, which Torres promised to effect in a few days. It was now resolved among the chiefs, that the most active measures

should be adopted to bring into the field, with every possible despatch, a well-trained army. Torres assured Mina, he might rest perfectly easy that it should soon be accomplished, as he could raise hosts of recruits from the pueblos and ranchos under his command; and he likewise further stated, that himself and subalterns had a supply of musquets which they had buried.

To the frank and unsuspecting mind of Mina, all this looked well; he did not even dream that this man could deliberately resolve on deceiving him, and ruining the cause they had both espoused. He flattered himself, that a more intimate acquaintance with each other's views would strengthen their friendship; and he resolved to do every thing in his power to shew Torres the high confidence he reposed in him. Accordingly, Colonel Noboa was ordered to proceed to Remedios, and there, under the eye, and with the co-operation of Torres, to organize and discipline the troops about to be raised.

After a few days had been spent at Sombrero, in forming the future plan of operations, Torres, with his staff, the governors, &c. accompanied by Colonel Noboa and the eight thousand dollars, returned to Los Remedios.

Mina opened a correspondence with the Spanish commandant of the town of Lagos, for the purpose of effecting the release of Lieutenant Porter, who had (as we have previously stated) been made prisoner, the night before the junction with the patriots. Mina offered to give in exchange for his officer, *any number* of the prisoners he then held. A very polite letter was received from the commandant, (whose name we regret has escaped us,) in which he expressed his grief at the unnatural course of the warfare, and lamented his inability to determine on the exchange without consulting his superior officer, to whom he had immediately transmitted the proposal. A few days afterwards a letter was received, signifying, that the commander-in-chief of the province (we presume Don José de la Cruz) had not only refused to liberate Mina's officer on any conditions, but expressly prohibited the commandant of Lagos from holding any communication whatever with a *rebel*. Thus were Mina's efforts to save his officer rendered abortive, and the Spanish government, rather than deliver up one man, conformably to the usages of civilized warfare and the principles of humanity, preferred risking the sacrifice of *two hundred Spanish prisoners*, then in Mina's hands, and which they had strong reasons to

suppose would be shot. When the Spanish prisoners were informed of the cruel and impolitic answer of the commandant-general, they uttered execrations against him, as well as their barbarous government. If these prisoners had been in the power of Padre Torres, he would without hesitation have shot the whole of them; and those that are now living, must acknowledge that they owe their existence entirely to the generosity of Mina.

We have since understood that Lieutenant Porter was sent to *San Blas*, from whence, we learn that he was deported to a presidio at *Manila*, there to labour on the fortifications, or perhaps to perish in the dungeons of the fortress—the usual fate of those who have the misfortune to be sent to that place.

The conduct of Mina towards his prisoners exhibits traits of policy and humanity, which merit particular notice. Those that were taken in the affair of *San Juan de los Llanos*, had been treated with every possible kindness, and the wounded among them met with the unremitting attentions of the surgeons. This treatment was totally unexpected on the part of the royalist troops, and filled them equally with astonishment and gratitude. The simple act of having removed some of the wounded from

the field of Peutillos, produced most important results among the royalists in favour of Mina, particularly among the European troops; his praise resounded through their ranks, and they now saw, that while opposing Mina, they were not combating for life, as had hitherto been the case; and that if the fortune of war should throw them into his hands, they would be treated as men and as soldiers. We subsequently learned from several deserters, that the royalist troops made Mina frequently the theme of their conversation, and many of them had determined, that when they should again come in contact with his division, they would merely make a shew of fighting, and seize the first occasion to join his standard. The prisoners taken at the affair of San Juan de los Llanos had frequently expressed a desire to join Mina's division. He was now anxious to augment his strength by every possible means, and as the money taken at the Jaral gave him the means of equipment, he addressed the prisoners in an appropriate manner, offering to receive all who would voluntarily enlist under his banners; at the same time generously declaring, that all who did not feel perfectly disposed to do their duty as soldiers of the republic, should be furnished with passports to return to their homes,

and have money to pay their expences. With a burst of joy and gratitude they accepted Mina's offer, and, with the exception of four or five persons, they all agreed to join him, and accordingly were sworn, and enrolled with the first regiment. These were an acquisition of high importance: recruits also were flocking to Sombrero from various parts of the country, so that Mina now saw a prospect of soon raising a fine regiment of infantry, provided the enemy would only continue inactive for a few weeks longer.

Some of the officers of the Guard of Honour were transferred to the first regiment, and Colonel Young received the appointment of inspector-general of the province. The administration of the division was new-modelled and established; a proportion of pay was given to the troops, satisfaction reigned among them, every hour augmented their confidence in their brave chief, and every thing was conducted with order and alacrity. Agents were despatched, with ample funds, to Queretaro, to Mexico, and to many of the manufacturing towns, to purchase cloths, linens, and necessaries for the soldiers and officers. In the Villa de Leon, contracts were made with the royalists to supply shoes and hats, and an arsenal was

erected in the fort. The tailors of the division, and many of the natives, were employed in making uniforms; an armoury, under the direction of an officer of the Guard of Honour, was established; and in fact, such dispositions were made, as denoted not merely the talent and foresight of the general, but the zeal and good conduct of his officers and soldiers.

From the Villa de Leon and the country adjacent, every article of comfort, and even of luxury, was supplied; and as the division was amply provided with money, they soon had a market in the fort, equal, perhaps superior to that of any of the royal towns in the plains.

On the summit of a barren rock, and in the zenith of enjoyment, the troops were indulging in visions of future glory; their past exertions and successes operated as a stimulus to gather fresh laurels, and they looked forward with ardour to the day, when the preparations they were making would enable them to commence their march for the Mexican capital.

The general satisfaction that pervaded Mina's officers and soldiers, was interrupted by the meanness and avarice of Don Pedro Moreno, commandant of the fort. This unprincipled individual bent all his thoughts and actions to the amassing of money.

A great proportion of the prize-money taken at Pinos, was in the provincial coin of Zacatecas; which had been made in that city for circulation, while the communication between the northern and southern provinces was interrupted. The metal was particularly pure; but since the communication had been opened, as the coin was badly stamped, it would only pass in the large cities, where its real value was known. This provincial money afforded a speculation too alluring to escape the attention of the avaricious Don Pedro, whose principal aim, like that of almost every patriot chief under the command of Torres, was to get money, no matter by what means.

He accordingly published a proclamation, declaring that Zacatecas dollars should only be current at four reals (fifty cents.) This affected, in a most tender point, those soldiers who held that kind of prize-money. It was soon discovered that Don Pedro, who had the greatest capital in the fort, purchased them in at the depreciation before mentioned, and sent them to Leon or Lagos, where he received full value for them; thus making fifty per cent out of the soldiers. It was likewise ascertained, that the Don and his officers, taking advantage of their auxiliaries' ignorance of the local customs and

language, monopolized in the market many essential articles, and resold them to the troops at double what they had cost.

This disgraceful business was communicated to Mina; but as he did not wish to interfere with the regulations of the fort, of which Moreno was the commandant, and did not think it a proper time to enter into a dispute with the latter, he appeared to take little notice of the transaction.

It will no doubt appear strange to the reader, that the patriots could procure from the royal towns supplies with such facility, but it is explained as follows.

The royalists, as well as the patriots, were alive to self-interest; the former knew, that unless they kept open a traffic with the latter, the inhabitants of the towns would be exposed to perish by famine. The patriots held under control the peasantry and their productions; they constantly hovered round the towns, scoured, in small parties, every foot-path and by-road, and were continually on the alert. The enemy could only sally out in strong divisions; they were afraid to separate in pursuit of the insurgents; while the latter, on the approach of a division, retired from the high roads a short distance, and as soon as the

royalists were out of sight, or returned within the walls of the towns, again came down to their work of annoyance. By following this species of warfare, they prevented any thing from entering a royalist town, except by a passport. The patriot and royalist commanders found it their interest to grant these passports. The latter, by these means, received provisions; the former, luxuries. A reciprocal traffic was thus established, each party charging heavy duties either on what went into, or on what came out of the towns. Far greater advantages, however, accrued to the royalists by this commerce, than to the opposite party. The royalists, by receiving provisions, were enabled to maintain their positions, which was the primary point. Their commerce prospered; it augmented, though in a small ratio, the revenue. They drew from the patriots their specie; and in short, it tended to demoralize the patriots, and materially to accelerate their subjugation. The patriots, on the other hand, received some manufactures and luxuries, which were by no means essential; and the revenue derived from this impolitic traffic, in the latter stages of the revolution, instead of being applied to the good of their country, flowed into the pockets of the commandants and their satellites.

Frequently the patriots had it in their power literally to starve out the royalists. Some patriotic commanders occasionally determined on this plan, but their efforts were unavailing, for want of union among the other commanders; for, while one was prohibiting provisions from entering a royal town, another was granting passports for their entrance into some other place.

The city of Valladolid was at one time, during the revolution, reduced to the last extremity, the patriots having prohibited all supplies from going into the city. Even the article of charcoal had become so scarce, that females of fortune used to ride in their coaches to the environs of Valladolid, for the purpose of meeting such daring fellows as had the good fortune to escape the vigilance of the patriots, and to bring in a few bushels of it. Disputes would arise about the distribution of the article; and when a person obtained half a bushel, by entreaty or purchase, it was considered a great piece of good fortune. The republican commander of the district at last, however, wanted money, and obtained it by granting licences. The city was thus supplied with provisions, and relieved from distress.

In latter days, this kind of trade between the

contending parties became so general and systematic, that there was scarcely a royal or patriot chief, who did not amass more or less wealth from these licences. This is the only mild trait that has been discernible in the course of the revolution; but as it springs from the detestable principle of avarice, it must not be considered as a social intercourse; for the very same people, who thus reciprocally trafficked, were at the same time shooting their respective prisoners in cold blood, and committing towards each other the most savage cruelties.

General Teran, whom we have before noticed for his extraordinary talents, had, in the year 1816, proposed a plan to Victoria and Osourno, for getting possession of the city of Vera Cruz, by marching with their joint forces, and taking up such positions as would have effectually intercepted all its supplies. He knew that such was the improvidence of the Spanish government, that they had no stores of provisions in reserve in that city, and that a vast population depended for its daily subsistence on an intercourse with the country; of course, if the latter had been suddenly cut off, the surrender of the city was inevitable, because they could not have obtained external succours by water, in time to remedy the evil.

We have been informed, by intelligent royalists of that city—and from our personal knowledge of its dependent condition on the score of provisions, we know it to be a fact—that if Teran's plans had been pursued, the place would have surrendered in fifteen or twenty days, more especially as at that time the great body of the inhabitants (European Spaniards, and officers of government excepted) were ripe for a revolt, the moment that a respectable division of the patriots should approach. The jealousies of Victoria and Osourno towards Teran, were the sole cause why the latter did not put his plan into execution. We have been thus particular in stating these facts, because they serve to illustrate our former remark—that the Spanish government owes the existence of its authority at this day in Mexico, entirely to the *ignorance, jealousy, ambition, and venality*, of certain chiefs among the patriots; and that, had their efforts been directed by union and system, the patriots might, at any one period for nearly seven years, have established the liberty of their country.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Intelligence of the fall of Soto la Marina received at Sombrero—Investment of the fort by Arredondo—Operations during the siege—Desertion of La Sala—His base conduct—Gallant defence of the garrison—Its capitulation—The terms—Their violation—Cruel treatment experienced by the captives, in Altamira, on the road to Vera Cruz, and in the dungeons of San Juan de Ulua—Departure of some of the captives for Spain—Order of the minister of war at Madrid—Strictures on the violation of the capitulation, and on the decree of the Cortes, of the 10th of April, 1813—Violation of Miranda's capitulation at Caracas—The consequences thereof—Cruelty of the Spaniards in Puerto Cavello—Dreadful measures of retaliation adopted by General Bolivar.*

WHILE Mina was making his preparations at Sombrero, he received the Gazette of Mexico, in which was announced the fall of the little fort at Soto la Marina. This was, indeed, painful intelligence, not only on account of the loss of some valuable officers, men, arms, and munitions of war; but because it cut him off from an external communication, so essential to the success of his operations.