

ton cruelty ; and it was now generally anticipated, that the capitulation would be wholly set aside.

The venerable prelate Dr. Mier, celebrated for his virtues and his sufferings, was denounced by the rector of Soto la Marina (an European Spaniard), for having performed the sacred ceremonies of the mass with *vino mescal*, (a spirit distilled from one of the species of maguey,) instead of wine. The rector, it will be recollected, received Mina with open arms, and afterwards, on his giving a promise to return, was permitted to leave the village ; but he came back only when the royalists had entered the place. The denunciation in question, however farcical it may appear to the reader, was fatal to the venerated Dr. Mier. In vain would he have stated, that no wine could be procured ; and that if he had not substituted *vino mescal*, he could not have performed the duty of celebrating the mass to the garrison. The worthy old man, in whose countenance shone a spirit of meekness and serenity that would have softened savages, became the object of insulting jests and outrage. He was loaded with enormous shackles, and in that deplorable state was sent under an escort to the city of Mexico. We afterwards learned, that, from debility and

ill usage, he had the misfortune on the road, to fracture a limb. Upon his arrival at Mexico, he was delivered to the holy office of the Inquisition, and again incarcerated in his former abode in the dungeons of that horrible instrument of religion, perverted from its sacred and holy design.

The garrison, which had been kept under close arrest for ten days, were then sent as prisoners to Altamira, and there put in confinement. This was such a direct infraction of the capitulation, that the prisoners naturally concluding they should ere long be treacherously sacrificed, had therefore meditated an attempt to escape. Accordingly, a plan was arranged among the greater part of them to rise upon the guard, make their way to Tampico, and there, in case of necessity, embark in the vessels then lying in the port. An enterprise of this kind was not so difficult or desperate as may at the first view be imagined. A small band of intrepid men, indignant at the violation of the capitulation, seeing before them no other prospect but a miserable captivity, and determined to die rather than remain slaves, must, under such circumstances be capable of performing extraordinary deeds ; and there is little doubt, that if they had once

overcome the guard, they would have succeeded. But, unfortunately for them, their intentions were either suspected, or discovered by one of their own party; and, within about an hour of the time when they contemplated striking the blow, they were astonished by the sudden appearance of a detachment of soldiers entering their prison.

The royalist officer, who commanded the party of soldiers, informed the captives that he had orders to put them in irons. Accordingly, they were all heavily ironed, and conducted to different places of confinement in the town. Then commenced a scene of cruelty, which, if it were possible to be described, would find but few readers willing to believe the horrible detail. Few, very few of those captives are now living; but should any of them cast their eye on this statement of their sufferings, they will readily perceive that the following sketch is but a mere outline of the miseries they endured.

They were conducted to Vera Cruz by the circuitous route of Pachuca, twenty-five leagues from the city of Mexico. Although on horseback, the weight of their irons, the length of the journey, want of wholesome food, and oppressive heat, brought on debility and disease; but their distress and torments seemed to excite

joy among their Spanish conductors. Some, overcome with their sufferings, fainted on the road, and were fastened to their horses with cords; others became frantic, and begged to be shot or bayoneted; while the remainder were driven along like cattle, to the end of the day's march, and then thrown into wretched hovels, swarming with vermin. A pittance of coarse food, barely sufficient to sustain life, was given them; but so great was their fatigue and bodily pain, that to eat was to add to their sufferings. Extreme debility of course ensued, and as scarcely any rest was allowed, it became almost impossible for any one of them even to bear the weight of his irons. Indeed, had it not been for the humanity of the Mexican population, very few would have survived.

In this dreadful condition they at length reached the city of Vera Cruz, where fourteen of them were incarcerated during a night in a room not capable of containing four men at their ease. They were all so huddled together and closely wedged, that they were obliged to stand upright. No air entered the place; a general suffocation had therefore nearly taken place. An officer, reduced to the last extremity, begged for a little water; the sentinel who was applied to, replied, he had positive orders

to grant nothing, and calmly wished the officer a speedy passage to the other world.

The dungeon in the castle of San Juan de Ulua, on a small island opposite Vera Cruz, in which these victims were afterwards confined, cannot be compared with any other in the world. Situated about fourteen feet under the arches of the castle, a gloomy light can only be admitted by a small grating at the top. There is a constant humidity; and as the bottom of the dungeon is below the level of the sea, water oozes in, and has opened passages through which crabs find access. These were finally welcome visitors to the prisoners, serving them for occasional food. The number of persons confined in so small a space, soon produced a pestilential air, and disease became general among them. The sentinels, on opening the doors, frequently fainted on inhaling the horrid effluvia issuing from the dungeon. The daily allowance of food was four ounces of bread, three of rice, and three of beans. This however was frequently curtailed, and was cooked in so disgusting a manner, without salt, that nothing but extreme hunger could induce some of the prisoners to touch any thing but the bread. In vain they begged that the sick should be separated from those who still retained some remnant of health:

they were all chained indiscriminately in pairs, and on opening the dungeon one morning, two were found dead in their chains.

At length, when an order came to remove the sick, it was only executed in extreme cases, and even then, the victim was removed to the hospital in irons, which were never struck off, till death had put an end to the miserable sufferer. There was one instance of such deliberate and savage cruelty, as to excite the indignation and reprehension of several Spanish officers.

One of the prisoners, a citizen of the United States, had the skin of his leg chafed by the irons. From the want of dressings, and wholesome aliment, the sore rapidly increased. The irritation and pressure of the iron, caused the flesh and muscles to become completely ulcerated to the bone; the whole leg became a mass of putrefaction. Unavailing were his petitions to have the irons taken off; his groans and excruciating agonies at length so far arrested the attention of his keepers, that he was removed to the hospital. The physician, on examining the horrid state of the leg, immediately addressed a representation to the governor, stating, that unless the irons were removed, death would inevitably ensue. Upon *the margin* of the memorial, the governor wrote the following in-

human replication, and sent it to the officer of the guard: "*Que los lleva, mientras respira;*" *Whilst he breathes, he shall wear them.* This barbarian was the Brigadier Don Juan Evia. In a few hours this victim of Spanish inhumanity expired.

We forbear swelling our pages with the farther recital of these barbarous acts, and conclude by stating, that of the thirty-seven officers and soldiers who capitulated at Soto la Marina, and about thirty others, foreigners of Mina's party, who, before and subsequent to that affair, had fallen into the hands of the royalists, at least thirty died, at Altamira, on the route to Vera Cruz, and in the dungeons of San Juan de Ulua.

The few that survived the horrors of those dungeons were shipped for Spain, to await the farther orders of the king. On their passage to the Peninsula, they were treated with every indignity and cruelty, with the exception of four, who were sent from Havana in the Spanish brig of war *Ligero*, commanded by Captain *Martinez*. This benevolent officer treated them with kindness, had their irons taken off during the passage, and gave them wholesome food.

In order to shew how far the Spanish autho-

rities in Mexico carried their vindictive feelings against every individual connected with Mina's party, we must notice their conduct to a French female, who had accompanied the expedition from Galvezton. The name of this extraordinary woman is *La Mar*. She had formerly resided at Carthage, and had distinguished herself on many occasions, by her intrepidity and her aversion to the Spaniards. At Soto la Marina, her attentions to the sick and wounded were unceasing; and during the siege she acted with the spirit of an Amazon. On the march to Altamira and Tampico, although exposed to the wanton and scornful jests of the Spaniards, she sustained herself with unshaken fortitude. She constantly displayed a cheerfulness, which, together with her indefatigable exertions to sooth the distresses of the prisoners, proved most consoling to them. She is said to have been afterwards a leading character in the revolt at Altamira. She was sent to Vera Cruz, and there confined in the hospital, where she was compelled to perform the most disgusting offices to the sick. At length she contrived to make her escape, leaving a letter addressed to the governor of Vera Cruz, and another to the viceroy, containing the most bitter reproaches for the violation of the capitulation, and me-

nacing them with the revenge of the patriots. She reached a division of the troops of Guadalupe Victoria, with whom she remained some time, but was so unfortunate as to fall again into the hands of the royalists. In July, 1819, she was confined within the walls of *Xalapa*, condemned to perform servile duties in a private family. In vain has this woman presented frequent petitions to be permitted to leave the country. The spirit of revenge and the cruelty of the immediate agents of Ferdinand VII. appear to have taken place of their former gallantry to the sex, and they hold her of so much importance, as to determine on keeping her a prisoner.

The fate of the captives who arrived in Spain, was, if possible, more dreadful than their previous sufferings in Mexico. This will be more clearly perceived from the royal order, communicated to the governor of Cadiz, from *Eguia*, the minister of war, of which the following is a translation:—

“The viceroy of New Spain having communicated to this department his intention of despatching for the Peninsula, to be placed at the disposal of our lord the king, the individuals named in the accompanying list, who, having been attached to the rabble (*gavilla*)

with which the traitor Xavier Mina invaded the territory of that kingdom, took the benefit of the amnesty (*indulto*) which the viceroy had there proclaimed, his majesty has been graciously pleased to command the supreme council of war, to determine what would be the best measures to adopt respecting them, on their arrival at Cadiz, or any other port in the Peninsula; and the said tribunal having declared its opinion, which has been approved of by his majesty, he has been pleased to order, ‘That the thirty-six individuals comprising the said list, shall, on their arrival in Spain, be distributed by fours, to the presidios of Cadiz, Malaga, Melilla, Peñon, Ceuta, and Alhucemas, and the remaining twelve shall be placed at the disposal of the captain-general of Majorca, in order that they may be distributed in the same proportions through the district under his command. In these places, they are to be retained as *convicts* (*presidarios*), there to remain during the pleasure of his majesty. The said governors are most scrupulously to watch over their conduct, and give timely notice of any thing they may remark, in order that the *greatest rigour* may be enforced against them; keeping constantly in view, that they are responsible for whatever disturbance may be

created by them, in whom not the smallest confidence can be placed, until by indubitable proofs they render themselves worthy of it, and of the clemency of his majesty. This royal decree is sent for your government, that, as far as concerns yourself, you may be prepared to carry it into execution.

(Signed) "EGUIA.

"Madrid, June 11, 1818."

On the arrival of these unfortunate men at Cadiz, the royal order just cited was strictly carried into effect, and they were despatched to Malaga, and the presidios on the coast of Africa. Their treatment was various, and depended on the caprice of the several commandants. To a few, it is true, some kindness was shewn, but the majority were severally loaded with chains, and linked either to galley slaves, or to Spanish or negro malefactors. Some were thrown into dungeons among the vilest criminals; and any melioration of these scenes of cruelty, could only be effected by money. But the little pecuniary supplies which were sent to them, by benevolent Americans and others, from Gibraltar and Malaga, were in some instances extorted from them by their merciless keepers, on the most absurd and trifling pretexts. In fact, so deplorable was

their situation, that many of them contemplated, and some of them actually succeeded in escaping to the Moors; thereby risking their lives, rather than remain in the hands of the Spaniards.

It is thus made manifest, by this unadorned narrative, that, in despite of every principle of honour and humanity, the gallant fellows who capitulated at Soto la Marina, were not only deprived of most of the stipulations of that solemn capitulation, but, after suffering the most horrid outrages, were at last condemned, by a royal decree, to indefinite or perpetual bondage, as if they had been malefactors of the very worst class.

No subtilty of policy can sanction a breach of good faith so inhuman and flagrant; and surely no civilized nation, except Spain, would at the present day openly avow, that she was not bound to fulfil engagements solemnly entered into under a capitulation, which her honour was pledged to observe.

The Spanish government may possibly have been authorized, by some precedents in the page of history, in refusing to extend the principles of civilized warfare to her subjects in a state of rebellion, and to the citizens and subjects of other nations, who were aiding them

in their struggles: but when a capitulation was made with these banditti (as they were called by the royalists), and when the royal amnesty had been offered to all who should submit, surely no apology can be found for treating such engagements and promises as mere delusions to gain possession of the hapless victims, who were credulous enough to rely on Spanish faith.

If the breach of the capitulation of Soto la Marina stood by itself, a single instance of Punic faith, it is probable that the Spanish government could have cloaked it by some fair pretext; but when we turn back even a hasty glance on the record of her American history, innumerable instances start forth to view, of capitulations trampled upon, treaties broken, and indultos falsely proffered and cruelly violated, forming a mass of national perfidy, to which the annals of the civilized world afford no parallel. The Mexican may forget that Carthage ever existed, and henceforth express, by *Spanish faith*, the superlative sense of what *Punic* proverbially denotes.

The infamous decree of the *Cortes*, dated the 10th of April, 1813, appears to have been the rule of conduct which has been pursued by every viceroy, captain-general, and commandant

of the royal troops, from that period up to the present day. The decree alluded to, and which must sully the archives of the *Cortes*, so long as it remains unrepealed, contains the following declaration:—"That it is derogatory to the majesty and dignity of the national congress, to confirm a capitulation made with malignant insurgents."

This decree was made for the express purpose of invalidating a solemn capitulation, which had been concluded, in July, 1812, between General *Monteverde*, commander of the royal Spanish forces in Venezuela, and General *Miranda*, as chief of the revolutionists.

The basis of that capitulation was, that the life, property, and person of every citizen, should be held sacred; that no one should be prosecuted for the past; and that a general oblivion and amnesty should be granted. In virtue of this capitulation, more than *four thousand* revolutionists delivered up their arms to the royal commander; but no sooner did *Monteverde* find himself fixed in the seat of power, at the city of Caracas, than he openly avowed his determination to annul the capitulation. This barbarian appears to have anticipated the atrocious decree of the *Cortes*, which we have

quoted, and seems to have been perfectly aware, that all the cruelties he was about to perpetrate, would be sanctioned by the boasted Spanish Congress.

As soon as the revolutionary troops were disarmed throughout the province, Monteverde sent parties of dissolute soldiery to seize nearly all the respectable Creoles in the province. They were torn from the arms of their wives and children, bound to horses' tails, and thus brought to the city of Caracas. After being exposed to the scoffs and insults of a brutal soldiery, they were thrown into close and damp dungeons, and crowded together in a manner more dreadful than the victims who perished in the black hole of Calcutta. The streets were filled with unhappy wives crying out for their husbands, mothers imploring for their sons, and sisters for their brothers; Monteverde and his satellites rejoicing, as beholding in such a spectacle the humiliation and despair of the Creoles. Private property was seized in every direction; distinguished females were dragged to the public square, where they were stripped naked, and treated in the most brutal manner. Doctor J. G. Roscio, who had been secretary of state under Miranda, and had rendered himself an

object of universal esteem by the simplicity of his manners, the extent of his erudition, the integrity of his life, and the splendour of his talents, which were devoted to the freedom of his native country, was loaded with chains, put into the stocks, and there exposed to the insults and derision of the European Spaniards. He was afterwards conveyed to a dungeon at La Guayra, until an opportunity offered to transport him, with the venerable canon of Chili, and other illustrious victims, to Spain. The events of the South American Revolution ought to afford a perpetual lesson to tyrants. The sage Roscio, after all the vicissitudes of his life, stands on ground from which he may look down upon the satellites of kings. He is now one of the civil heads of the government of Venezuela; and to him the royal authorities are now offering their supplications for a truce. The decree of the 10th of April, 1813, cannot be forgotten by one of its most illustrious victims.

More than *fifteen hundred Creoles*, of the highest respectability in the country, were chained in pairs, and conducted to the horrid dungeons of La Guayra and Puerto Cavello, where, in a few weeks, many of them perished by suffocation and disease. While Monteverde