

lage of that name, in the intendency of Valladolid, about twenty leagues south-west of the Valle de Santiago, and eighteen north-west of the city of Valladolid. It was surrounded by a swamp or pond, containing from five to six feet of water in depth, and could only be reached by canoes. Its garrison was composed of one hundred tolerably well-disciplined infantry. At this place the Republican Gazette was printed. There was, likewise, within the fort an extensive manufactory of powder, whence supplies had been sent to Los Remedios. The members of the government (if it may be so called) received Mina with cordiality. He frankly unfolded to them his plans, particularly that of attacking Guanaxuato; but this plan did not meet with their approbation. They did not believe that it could be accomplished with such troops as could then be placed under Mina's command. They were aware, that with undisciplined men, nothing could be effected, that would shed a lustre on Mina, or be of essential benefit to their country. They strongly recommended to the general to withdraw his remaining officers and men from the fort of Los Remedios, the place being impregnable, and well stored with provisions; and there being consequently no apprehensions of its

falling into the hands of the enemy, there was no absolute necessity that called for the presence of Mina's officers.

The members of the government endeavoured to impress upon Mina's mind the importance of organizing a body of troops, before he should undertake any momentous enterprise; and that, for the accomplishment of that purpose, the country between Xauxilla and the shores of the Pacific Ocean was the most proper place, as the enemy were there less numerous than in the Baxio, and the people were universally earnest in the patriot cause; besides, that the fertility of the country yielded ample supplies, and its natural positions afforded complete security. They made use of the most cogent arguments to persuade Mina to adopt this plan; but, after giving them all the consideration to which they were entitled, he remained unconvinced of its feasibility. His primary object was to relieve Los Remedios. Knowing the critical situation to which the enemy were reduced, by the failure of their supplies of provisions, and believing that if the design of compelling Liñan to withdraw from the siege of that fort, by the extremity of hunger, was abandoned, such another opportunity might not again occur; he flattered himself that if he

could effect this his favourite object, the affairs of the revolution would then assume a different aspect. He was, it is true, sensible that full reliance could not be placed upon the troops he commanded; but he thought, if he could obtain fifty infantry from Xauxilla, to be added to a like number from among the prisoners of San Luis de la Paz, whom Ortiz had undertaken to train, that with these, and an overwhelming force of cavalry, he should be able to capture the city of Guanaxuato. Mina likewise informed his counsellors, that his honour was implicated in relieving the fort of Remedios, and that he had also pledged himself to attack Guanaxuato.

The government, on finding his resolution taken, ordered fifty infantry of the fort to march to his place of rendezvous. Although the members of the government much regretted Mina's determination, yet they all admired the generous sentiments by which he was actuated in vindicating his plan, and earnestly wished him full success.

The general marched from Xauxilla, taking, on his return, a circuitous route through *Puruandiro*, formerly a considerable and rich town, but which, by the mandates of Torres, had been reduced to a heap of ruins, with the

usual exception of the churches. It lies about sixteen leagues north of the city of Valladolid, and was at that time in possession of the patriots, who hailed the arrival of Mina among them by illuminations and other public demonstrations of joy. After remaining there two days, for the purpose of procuring some pecuniary aid, to carry into effect his intended object, he proceeded to the Valle de Santiago. He there found a small party of the patriot troops from Xalpa, awaiting his arrival. But he had been in the town only a few minutes, when the approach of a strong body of the enemy was announced from the look-out posts on the heights. It was the division of Orrantia. Mina, who entertained the most sovereign contempt for Orrantia, as a military man, could not endure the thought of making a passive retreat, although he knew the enemy's superior numbers. He therefore placed his few men in ambush, in the corn that was growing in the vicinity of the place, and close to the road by which he presumed the enemy would pursue him; intending, if their cavalry only advanced in pursuit of him, to draw them into the ambuscade, in which case the destruction of a portion of them was certain. Orrantia, having entered the town, and receiving information that Mina,

with some troops, was hovering about the place, halted his troops. After a considerable lapse of time, he again advanced from it, but so cautiously, that Mina, finding it impossible to succeed in his designs, withdrew his men from their ambuscade, covering their retreat in person, with a few men. By taking a circuitous route through the heights, he descended in the rear of the enemy, and proceeded to La Caxa, passing through Pueblo Nuevo. A Spanish officer, whose name honour forbids us to mention, there presented himself as a deserter to Mina. He obtained the confidence of the general; and, after having been furnished by him with some money, was despatched upon a secret mission. A sergeant and two soldiers of the regiment of Zaragoza likewise there deserted to him. They confirmed the accounts which had been previously received, of the enemy's famished condition; of the discontent which prevailed among their troops generally; and of the numerous desertions which took place every night, especially among the Creoles. But the spirit of desertion which Mina's operations had begun to excite in the enemy's ranks, was at once checked by the unexpected and disastrous events we are about to narrate in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER X.

Mina advances against Guanajuato—Description of that city—He attacks it—Failure—He proceeds with an escort to the rancho del Venadito—Movements of Orrantia—Mina made prisoner—Brutal conduct of Orrantia towards him—Death of Mina—Reflections—State of Society in Mexico—Remarks on the present state of the royal forces, and the facility with which the country could be invaded, and its emancipation accomplished.

AT the hacienda of La Caxa, Mina assembled about eleven hundred troops, with which he advanced to the hacienda of Burras. In the night of the 23d, avoiding the high roads, and having made a circuit through the cultivated grounds, he passed along the heights immediately over the city of Guanajuato, and gained, by day-light, an unfrequented spot called *La Mina de la Luz*, in the mountains, about four leagues therefrom. He halted there during the day, awaiting the arrival of some reenforcements of infantry and cavalry despatched by Don Encarnacion Ortiz. They joined him in the afternoon; and his force, thus augmented,