

him. Aware of their intention, and having concerted measures with his officers, he did not disturb the soldiers in the rest which they were enjoying, till the moment arrived. Then, telling them what the force was which was ordered against them, they exclaimed, with one voice, that it would not be for their honour to abandon the post without resistance, even though all France should attack it. Two companies, under D. Juan de Villaneuva, defended the fords of the river, and repulsed the enemy in their first attempt at crossing, forcing them to retire with such precipitation, that some of Mina's men, who passed over at night to see what they had left behind, collected more than an hundred muskets from the field. The French took a position which Mina was not strong enough to force, and for a day and half both parties kept up a fire upon each other; by that time a reinforcement came to the enemy from Pamplona. The river was well defended against them, and before they won the passage they lost above 300 killed, and twice the number wounded: among those who died of their wounds was Leon Asurmendi, a renegade Spaniard, known by the name of *Conveniencias*, and infamous for the crimes which he had committed in aid of the intrusive government. Having succeeded in crossing the river, the French chose rather to perpetrate their usual cruelties upon the inhabitants of Lumbier than follow Mina, who retired without loss, and in the best order. They obtained information from some traitors of the place where the Spaniards had their hospital; but Cruchaga and Gorriz were too vigilant to let it be surprised, and when the enemy approached they were so warmly received that they were driven back the four hours' march to Lumbier, leaving on the way sixty killed, many wounded, and twelve prisoners.

Mina was at this time raising a fourth battalion; the French sent a detachment to cut it off before it should be completely

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formed. Four hundred and fifty men, destined for this service, proceeded against the village of Echarri-Aranaz, where the commandant of the battalion, D. Ramon de Ulzurrun y Eraso, had only about one hundred to oppose them. He left the village, and disposed his handful of men so judiciously, for the double purpose of concealing their numbers and annoying the enemy, that the French dared not enter the place, and during the night the officers did the piquet duty themselves, being afraid to trust their soldiers. "Reams of paper," Mina said, "would not suffice for the details of all the skirmishes in which he and his party were engaged, . . . for every day, and sometimes twice or thrice in the day, they were occurring."

The more the enemy suffered from this band, the more efforts they made for its destruction, and towards the close of January, Mina was again surrounded. But this lion was not to be taken in the toils. His first measure was to determine upon a point of reunion, and with that spirit which made him so truly formidable to the usurpers of his country, he fixed upon the mountains immediately above Pamplona. Here, having overcome every difficulty that a vigilant and powerful enemy could interpose, Mina collected his gallant companions: still the pursuers were on all sides; there was not a point which he could occupy without being attacked, neither could he remain in that position; and 2000 men, with a proportionate cavalry, sallied from Pamplona to dislodge him. Mina had not waited for this: knowing that there was no escape but by becoming the assailant, he sent Gorriz to El Carrascal, upon the left of the city, to call the attention of the enemy in that direction, and fall upon any convoy or escort which might be upon the road. This movement succeeded perfectly: the troops which were advancing had proceeded little more than a mile when they were hastily recalled by the alarm which Gorriz had raised in another



quarter, and the governor, thinking that Mina was on that side, and that the other roads were secure, ordered a convoy of sixty carts with ammunition and stores to set out for Vitoria; 200 men escorted it, and 1000 men followed at about an hour's interval: . . . in Navarre distance is commonly expressed by time . . . the best measure in so mountainous a country.

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When Mina received intelligence that this convoy was setting out, his men were fasting, and they were three hours' march from the position which it was proper to occupy for intercepting it. Leaving Cruchaga with the main body, he set off with the horse and two companies of foot; but the convoy had passed the place where he meant to attack it before he could come up. The horsemen, however, fell upon its escort, and they, abandoning the carts, took possession of an adjoining height, where they defended themselves, relying upon the greater force in their rear, and likewise upon assistance from the fortress of Irurzun, which was only at half an hour's distance. Mina had no time to complete their destruction; it was of more importance for him to secure the ammunition, more precious in his circumstances than the richest booty, and for this there was little leisure; . . . on two sides the enemy were approaching in force, and the escort was ready to assail him on the third. Night came on, and on all sides there was firing; his men became mingled with the enemy, and sometimes engaged one another. But when Mina had succeeded in collecting his men, and would have contented himself with drawing them off in safety, and destroying the stores, a general cry arose that they would rather perish than leave behind them what they should make so useful. The men, therefore, loaded themselves with cartridges, of which, after each man had stored himself, they carried off more than 60,000. Other effects, however tempting, they regarded not:



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but, spoiling what they could, and setting fire to the powder carts, they drew off in safety with their precious plunder. The joy of Mina and his comrades for this success was clouded by one of those fatal accidents for which even a soldier is not prepared: Gorriz that day, in leading on his troops, was thrown from his horse, and lived only long enough to go through the last ceremonies of the Romish superstition: however worthless these were to the sufferer, the thought that his salvation was thus secured was the consolation of his comrades, and probably of no little importance in keeping up their hopes and their belief in the protection of Heaven. Mina spoke of his loss with the deepest sorrow, a sorrow which was felt by all his fellows in arms, whom he had more than once led on to victory, and sometimes saved from destruction.

Mina was now in that perilous stage of his progress, when every new exploit, adding to his celebrity without adding to his strength, served to increase his danger, by exasperating afresh the enemy, and exciting them to make greater efforts to destroy him. In Aragon, as well as in Navarre, the French troops were put in motion to hunt him down, by night and day, like a wild beast. Harispe occupied the bridges of Sanguessa, Galipienzo, and other passes into Aragon; Panatier with another division watched La Ribera de los Arcos, Estella, and its vicinity; and three moveable columns kept up the chase. The first impulse of the Navarrese hero, when he found himself thus beset, was to attack the enemy; but for this he was too weak. Turning back, he marched above Pamplona by El Carrascal, and there he discovered that two of their columns were close at hand; upon this he countermarched towards Lumbier. Harispe was informed of his movements, and at Irurozqui Mina found the French in his front: his men had made long and rapid marches for the three preceding days, nevertheless they prepared for battle with

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their wonted resolution. Before the firing began Harispe sent a cavalry officer with a flag, which Cruchaga, who went out to meet him as an enemy, discovered just in time as he levelled a pistol at him. The Frenchman said, he had matters of great importance to treat of, and Mina therefore came to hear them. His errand related to the treatment of prisoners; it was believed in the French army that Mina's soldiers gave no quarter, and he came to request that this practice might no longer be continued. Mina on his part disclaimed the system which was imputed to him, and required a like declaration on the part of the enemy; to which the French officer replied, that his general was distinguished for humanity, and that all the officers of that division had received orders to treat such of Mina's men as might fall into their hands as prisoners of war, since they now knew that they did not deserve to be styled brigands, but defenders of their country. Mina observed in his dispatches, that this officer behaved with perfect courtesy, and with more honour than was usual for a Frenchman; and he clearly perceived that this acknowledgment of the rights of war proceeded not from the humanity of the general, but from the discontent of the miserable men under his command, whom Buonaparte and his agents in Spain sent to butcher or to be butchered.

An affair ensued, in which Harispe lost half his cavalry in vainly attempting to break the Spaniards. Five times he attacked their position, and was as often repulsed; but Mina perceiving that a movement was made to cut off his retreat, withdrew in time, in good order, and keeping up a brisk fire. This continued till evening closed; night set in with fogs, and the French and Spaniards got confused and intermingled, firing upon their comrades: at length the latter retired into a difficult pass, where the enemy did not venture to follow them. Mina now determined, with the advice of Cruchaga and his other

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 XXXVIII. a different point ; a measure which would distract the attention  
 1811. of the enemy, who would thus lose sight of him, withdraw per-  
 haps part of their troops, and divide the others, and thus give him  
 opportunity to collect his companions again, and strike a blow  
 when it was not expected. He himself retained only twenty  
 horsemen, with whom he meant to make a circuit to preserve  
 order among his scattered bands, and prevent excesses of any  
 kind. After a while he came to a village near the French  
 border, where some of his companions had stationed themselves,  
 and where he hoped to give a little rest to his comrades ; but an  
 overpowering force was brought against him, and he, again dis-  
 persing his infantry, went with his little band of horsemen into  
 France. Here he found that his name was known, and his vir-  
 tues honoured by the mountaineers, while every heart cursed  
 the tyrant who inflicted curses upon Europe, and brought dis-  
 grace as well as misery upon France, by the crimes which he  
 compelled her to perpetrate. They offered all they had to the  
 Spaniards, but Mina would suffer nothing to be taken without  
 paying its fair price.

It was not long before the French discovered with astonish-  
 ment, that Mina had entered France ; they dispatched forces  
 against him, which he eluded, and, wandering about the borders  
 of Roncesvalles, Viscarret, and Olbayceta, surprised one of their  
 parties, killing two officers and seven men. A handful of men  
 only were engaged, . . . but it was a well-timed success, and an  
 auspicious scene, and Mina said, that the Spanish spirit of old  
 times shone in his comrades that hour. A greater force, to  
 which the fugitives had given the alarm, followed him during the  
 whole night, but without success ; and he continued among the  
 mountains within the French border, waiting impatiently for  
 better prospects. " From thence," says he, " I stretched my eyes



over this kingdom close at hand, covered with innumerable enemies, and I groaned for her miserable condition; the imprisonment of so many of its good inhabitants, the persecution and the banishment of the relations of my companions rent my soul, seeing myself without the means for redressing their wrongs.”

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But the opportunity which he expected, and which he provided by his retreat, soon occurred; the greater part of the troops which had been sent against him returned toward Zaragoza, and so well had Mina instructed his officers, and so well did they execute their instructions, that when he re-entered Navarre, his whole band were re-assembled within four and twenty hours. “It would not have been strange,” he said, “if some of the men, closely pursued as they had been, and dispersed in scattered parties, as the only means of safety, had returned home; but only a very few who were sick had done this, and of them not a man without his officer’s permission.” During this long pursuit, the enemy, less accustomed to fatigues and privations than the hardy mountaineers of Spain, suffered a tenfold greater loss than they inflicted; above 1000 of their men were invalided, and as many more wounded in the incessant skirmishes which took place.

A seasonable supply of flints, cartridges, and other necessities, was sent at this time to Mina by the Junta of Aragon. He was soon seen at the gates of Estella; from that city he decoyed an hundred of the garrison, by showing only a few of his men, whom they sallied to cut off; then he rose upon them, killed half their number, and took the rest prisoners under the very walls of the fortress, not one escaping. A letter from Reille to Marshal Bessieres was intercepted shortly afterwards, in which he said, “that by this imprudence of the governor of Estella, they had lost more men in one foolish affair, than they had taken from the enemy during a pursuit of two months. The

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 XXXVIII. and wounded were in all parts of the country, and yet it was  
 1811. impossible to detect them: the public spirit was very bad, and  
 the business could never be completed in Navarre, till a place of  
 deportation was appointed for all the relations and connexions  
 of the brigands, and strong escorts along the road to convoy  
 them thither."

Renewing their efforts for the destruction of an enemy who  
 became every day more popular among his oppressed country-  
 March 23. men, the French attacked Mina a few days after his exploit be-  
 fore Estella, near Arcos. His inferiority in numbers was com-  
 pensated by his perfect knowledge of every foot of the ground,  
 the experience of his officers in their own mode of warfare, and  
 his confidence in all his followers. After an action which con-  
 tinued nearly the whole day, he drew off in good order, and  
 scarcely with any loss, having killed and wounded nearly 400  
 of the enemy. They obtained a reinforcement, and renewed  
 March 26. the attack on the third day at Nacar, where he occupied a  
 strong position, and where he succeeded in repulsing them,  
 with the loss of forty killed, about 200 wounded, and seventeen  
 prisoners. He now entered Aragon, and while one part of his  
 force, under Cruchaga, approached Zaragoza, Mina, with three  
 companies and a few horse, surprised a party of the enemy con-  
 sisting of 152 gendarmes and twenty-eight cavalry: the horses,  
 the commander, another officer, and seventy-seven of the soldiers,  
 were made prisoners, all the rest fell, not a man escaping.  
 Successes of this kind made Mina dangerous in more ways  
 than one to the invaders. Germans, Italians, and even French,  
 deserted to him. In the course of five days fifteen hussars  
 came over with their arms and horses, and fourteen foot sol-  
 diers, besides some poor *juramentados*, who were happy in an  
 opportunity of joining their countrymen.



The Junta of Valencia sent him a timely supply of arms; he issued his proclamations through Navarre, and a man was soon found for every musket. Another convoy from Valencia was on its way, and had to cross the Ebro in front of Calahorra. Mina set forth to secure its passage, leaving one battalion at Puente la Reyna to observe the enemy in Pamplona, and another at Carcar to cover Lodosa, which the enemy occupied, and from whence he apprehended most danger. When he reached the river he stationed part of his little force upon the left bank to guard against any attack from Lodosa, on that side also, and with two companies forded, meaning to attack a body who occupied a village on the other side, about a league from the ford. They fled at his approach, leaving some of their effects behind them: 150 horse also, who were in Calahorra, fled to Lodosa; and the passage being thus freed, Mina received his convoy, and returned the same night to Estella, . . . for the French after their late loss had evacuated that city, and he made it at this time his head quarters.

Well had it been for Spain if all the supplies which the Juntas of Aragon and Valencia raised had been as well employed as the little portion allotted to Espoz y Mina. The French were now so well aware of the superiority of his followers over their troops in personal conflict, that they never moved against him without artillery. In his mode of warfare it was impossible for him to be provided with equal arms; but one of his men, by name Josè Suescun y Garcia, contrived to fix three barrels upon one stock and fire them by one lock; they carried two ounce balls, and were found to succeed well the first trial, which was in an action fought by Cruchaga near Tallalla, with an inferior force against 1500 foot and 180 horse. Between 300 and 400 of the enemy were killed and wounded, and twelve were made prisoners, whom Mina, upon the pro-

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