

and loop-holes for musquetry, and ditches and parapets across the roads. These stations served a double purpose; for here at every step the sick and wounded, who were on their way to France, were inspected with a vigilance so severely exercised, that it seemed as if the persons in authority, who could not escape from this hateful service, found a malignant satisfaction in disappointing others of their expected deliverance. They sometimes remanded men who had past at several posts; and there were cases in which the wound or the malady (aggravated, perhaps, by so cruel a disappointment) proved fatal at the very place where the sufferer had been refused permission to proceed, upon the plea that he was not sufficiently disabled!

Every where, but more especially at Irun and all the frontier places, accounts were kept for the guerrillas of the troops who past through, both of those who were entering the country, and of invalids on their way from it. Every artifice was used to delay the enemy when it was desired that one of these parties should have time to come up for attack, or for securing a retreat. For this purpose the priest or the alcalde would officiously prepare refreshments, while some messenger, with all the speed of earnest good will, conveyed the necessary intelligence. This would have occurred in ordinary wars; but the treachery with which they had been invaded, and the cruelties which were continually practised against them, made the Spaniards regard any vengeance, however treacherous, as an act of justice. An alcalde and his son were put to death at Mondragon for having at different times assassinated more than two hundred Frenchmen. When they were led to execution, they exulted in what they had done, accounting it among their good and meritorious works: and they said to their countrymen, that if every Spaniard had discharged his duty as well as they had done, the enemy would ere then have been exterminated, and the land been free.

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Alcalde of
Mon-
dragon.

Lord
Blayney,
i. 389.

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Asturias.

Porlier.

*D. José
Duran.*

Nov. 20.

It was in this part of Spain that the most noted guerrilla leaders appeared, the Empecinado only excepted; the most mountainous and rugged country being most favourable to their mode of warfare. There were many bands in Asturias; the most numerous was that which Porlier had raised; but Porlier was a man of family, who had rank in the army, and his people had more of the feeling and character of soldiers than was commonly found in such companies. There were many also in the Montaña where Longa obtained a good name. The French endeavoured to counteract this system of national hostility, in the province of Soria, by forcing the men into their own service: with this view they ordered a conscription, and the alcalde of Valdenebro was put to death by them in Burgo de Osma, for not having enforced it in obedience to their authority. They called for all single men from fifteen to forty years of age, and all married ones whose marriage was not of earlier date than the year on which this dreadful struggle was begun. D. José Duran, an old officer who had grown gray in the regular service, and whom the Junta of Soria had appointed to the command there and in Rioja, impeded the execution of this scheme, by his enterprises and his edicts: he threatened such of the inhabitants as were disposed to obey the orders of the enemy, lest their own safety might be compromised; and he interdicted the use of the word in that acceptance, saying it was their religion and their liberty which were compromised by such obedience, and that no Christian and true Spaniard could incur the guilt of such a compromise. He forbade any inhabitant of the province to enter Soria while the enemy kept a garrison there, on pain of being regarded as a traitor, whatever motive or excuse he might allege. He declared that every person obeying an order of the intrusive Government should be put to death, . . . every village burnt, . . . so that nothing might exist in Spain which had contributed towards its subjugation.

tion. Whenever the enemy approached a village, the inhabitants were enjoined to leave it, driving all their cattle into the mountains; and they were commanded not to leave provision of any kind in their houses, unless it were poisoned; to the end that, either by want or by poison, the enemy, who were employed in destroying an unoffending people, might be themselves destroyed. The state of feeling may be understood in which such an edict could be issued by a provincial Junta who lived in hourly peril, and whose dearest connexions were the victims of foreign barbarity; but when the edict itself was sanctioned by the national Government—for sanctioned it was by being allowed to appear in the Regency's Gazette unannulled and uncensured—it became a national disgrace.

When the guerrillas of Asturias, the Biscayan provinces, Soria, or Rioja, were closely pressed by the enemy, they usually sought refuge in Navarre, or the higher parts of Aragon: here they had their chief strength. The French, indeed, complained, in their intercepted dispatches, that these bands gave the law in Navarre, levied contributions there, and even collected the duties at the frontier custom-houses. For this superiority they were beholden to Xavier Mina. His career was short, but remarkable not less for the signal successes which he obtained, than for his hair-breadth escapes. On one occasion he and his little party were driven to seek refuge on a rock near Estella, where they defended the only accessible side till night-fall, and escaped during the darkness by letting themselves down the precipice by a rope. In the course of five months after his first appearance in the field, his celebrity was such that he might have raised an army from among the youth of Navarre and Upper Aragon, if there had been means to arm, and officers to discipline them: owing to the want of these, and chiefly of officers, he never had more than 1,200 under his command;

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*Xavier
Mina.*

CHAP. greater numbers would have embarrassed him, these he was
 XXXIII. capable of directing: voluntary rations were provided for them
 1810. by the villages, and for ammunition and money he looked to the
 enemy, calling the wood of Tafalla his powder-magazine and his
 mint. As a farther resource, he levied the duties of which the
 French complained, and he collected the rents belonging to the
 convents and churches, as having in this extremity reverted to
 the nation; and from these funds he was enabled to pay liberally
 and regularly for intelligence. The wisdom of his measures,
 not less than the chivalrous spirit of enterprise which he dis-
 played, made him so formidable to the enemy, that his capture
 was considered by them as more important than a victory, when
 accident threw him into their hands. Chance had delayed the
 advance of a convoy for which he was waiting: he was informed
 of the delay, but proposed to wait still; and went himself on
 horseback with only one companion, by moonlight, to recon-
 noitre the ground. The enemy, who would have thought no
 precautions necessary against a Spanish army at that time, stood
 in such fear of Mina, that they had formed a double line of out-
 posts, and sent out patrols; by some of whom he and his com-
 rade were surprised, dismounted, and taken. It is remarkable
 that he was not put to death as soon as identified, for he had
 been proscribed as a leader of banditti, and his capture as such
 was exultingly announced; but some person of more generosity
 than those who thus reviled him must have interfered; and where
 so little that has the character of honour or humanity can be
 recorded, it must be regretted that we know not to whom this
 redeeming act should be ascribed.

*Xavier
 Mina made
 prisoner.*

*Espoz y
 Mina
 elected to
 succeed
 him.*

When Mina's followers had thus lost their leader, disputes
 arose concerning the command; and there being no one whose
 personal qualifications were generally acknowledged, it was re-
 solved to choose his uncle for his name's sake, for in that name

there was a strength. His uncle, Francisco Espoz y Mina, was born in 1781, in the village of Ydozin, upon a little farm, the sole patrimony of his family, to which he succeeded on his father's death. His education consisted in having merely been taught to read and write; and husbandry had been his only occupation, till under the impulse of the general feeling he took arms against the oppressors of his country; and having, according to his own account, done to them all the hurt he could as long as he remained in his own house, he enlisted as a volunteer in Doyle's battalion. Soon afterwards, using that freedom which the times allowed, he joined his nephew's guerrilla, and on the evening after the young hero's capture, he left the band apparently with the intention of betaking himself to some other course of life; a deputation of seven persons followed him, and urged him to take the command, which having against his will accepted, he began to exercise with a strength of character that never halted in half measures. One of his first acts was to put down those who resisted the authority which he claimed as commander-in-chief of the guerrillas of Navarre, and in which the Junta of Aragon confirmed him. A certain Echeverria had aspired to this rank; he had some 800 men in his company, consisting mostly of German deserters, who inflicted more evil upon the peasantry than upon the French. Espoz y Mina with about half that force, surprised and arrested him, had him shot with three of his principal comrades, and incorporated the men in his own band. A gang of forty ruffians, with a woman by name Martina for their leader, infested Biscay and Alava, and committed so many murders, that the cry of the land went forth against them; he dispatched a party, who surprised half these banditti with their execrable mistress at their head, and they were sent to summary execution. Espoz y Mina himself narrowly escaped from the treachery of another adventurer, who

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CHAP. for his evil countenance was known by the appellation of
 XXXIII. Malcarado. This man had been a shepherd, and afterwards a
 1810. serjeant in Mina's troop. He, too, intended to make war upon
 his own account; but finding that this would not be permitted
 by the new guerrilla chief, who suffered no banditti to exercise
 their vocation within his reach, he deemed it better to make
 terms with the French than be exposed to danger on both sides;
 feigning, therefore, to serve under Espoz y Mina, he gave
 general Pannetier information of his movements, . . . and drew off
 the advanced guard from before the village of Robres, so as to
 give a French detachment opportunity to enter while the chief
 was in bed. The alarm roused him but just in time; he de-
 fended himself at the entrance of the house with the bar of the
 door for want of any other weapon, till his faithful follower,
 Luis Gaston, came to his assistance and brought a horse.
 Enough of his people collected to make head against the enemy,
 rout them, and rescue their prisoners. Immediately he pursued
 Malcarado, and having what was deemed sufficient evidence of
 his treason, ordered him to be shot, and the priest of the village
 and three alcaldes to be hanged, side by side, as his accom-
 plices.

A leader who acted always thus decisively, in disregard of
 forms, upon the apparent justice of the case, inspired his fol-
 lowers with confidence, and obtained submission every where.
 Where his orders were not executed with the alacrity of good-will,
 they were obeyed for fear. The alcaldes of every village were
 required to give him immediate information whenever they re-
 ceived orders from the French for making any requisition: it was
 at the hazard of their lives to do this; but so surely as they
 failed to do it, they were seized in their beds and shot. The
 miserable people were thus continually placed between two
 dangers; but their hearts were with Mina; they were attached

to him by self-interest as well as by national feeling, for he encouraged them to trade with France, receiving money from the rich traders for passports, by which means he was enabled both to pay his men, and to reward his spies liberally: and thus also he obtained many articles which it would otherwise have been difficult to procure. Circumstances having forced him into a way of life which he would not have chosen, he devoted himself to it with his whole heart and soul; and his strength both of constitution and character were equal to their trials. It is said that two hours sleep sufficed for him; when he lay down it was with his pistols in his girdle, and the few nights which he slept under a roof were past with less sense of security than he felt in the wilds, although his first care was to secure the doors, and guard against a surprisal. He was not encumbered with baggage; the nearest house supplied the wardrobe when he changed his linen; and he and his men wore sandals that they might more easily ascend the heights in the hair-breadth adventures to which they were exposed. His powder was made in a cave among the mountains; sometimes he obtained it from Pamplona, notwithstanding the vigilance of the enemy. His hospital was in a mountain village; when the French more than once endeavoured to surprise it, timely intelligence was given, and the villagers carried the sick and wounded in litters, upon their shoulders, into the fastnesses. He kept no man in his troop who was known to be addicted to women, lest by their likeliest means he might be betrayed. No gaming was allowed among his men, nor were they permitted to plunder; when the fight was over every one might keep what he could get; but woe to him who should lay hand on the spoil before the struggle was at an end, and the success had been pursued to the utmost!

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In such enterprises as those of the two Minas and the other guerrilla chiefs, the Timours, the Babers, and Khouli Khans of Eastern history, were trained; but neither men nor officers were likely to be formed in them for the operations of regular war. The restraints, the subordination, the principle of obedience which the soldier is compelled to learn, of the necessity of which his understanding is convinced, and to which, if his disposition be good, he conforms at last morally as well as mechanically, these in no slight degree counteract the demoralizing tendencies of a military life, and compensate for its heart-hardening ones. The good soldier becomes a good citizen when his occupation is over; but the guerrillas were never likely to forego the wild and lawless course in which they were engaged; and, therefore, essential as their services now were, thoughtful men looked with the gloomiest forebodings to what must be the consequence of their multiplication, whenever this dreadful struggle should be ended; they anticipated the utter ruin of Spain. The course of events, however, was not to be controlled; circumstances had produced this irregular force, and there was now no possibility of defending the country without it. Lord Wellington had felt how hopeless it was to act in concert with a Spanish army, wherein good intentions were frustrated by obstinate counsels, and courage rendered unavailing by insubordination; but he felt at this time of what importance it was to have a nation in his favour, and how materially the movements of the enemy were impeded and their difficulties increased by the guerrilla parties who acted along their whole line, from the Pyrenees to the frontiers of Beira. Massena's situation became every day more trying; the French in Spain were so little able to feed his army, that he was obliged to have his biscuit from France, when it had to be

Sem. Patr.
No. 82,
p. 338.

escorted 800 miles through a hostile country! It was as difficult for him to send dispatches as to receive supplies; and the first intelligence which Buonaparte obtained of his situation after he advanced to the lines of Torres Vedras, was brought from London, by persons employed in smuggling guineas to the continent.

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of their country. Necessity as the intrusive Government was, it kept these places of amusement open, in the spirit of a British policy, taking its erroneous estimate of human nature from man in his most corrupted state: but the numbers of the audience, and the accounts of the theatres, were no longer published as in other times. Schemes of education were hinted at, and for the encouragement of literature, the auction which such men as Gabarras and Bripido laid to their souls. Canals were projected, when couriers were not safe even at the gates of the capital, and the improvement of agriculture was announced, while cultivators were sent to the generals and military governors, urging them to prevent the destruction of the vines and olive trees by the troops, and promising that this ruinous course should not be continued, if the peasants would be careful always to provide fuel of their own cutting.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CORTES. PLAN WHICH THE JUNTA HAD ADOPTED
ALTERED BY THE REGENCY. FIRST PROCEEDINGS OF
THE CORTES. NEW REGENCY.

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*Schemes of
the intrusive
Government.*

WHILE the Peninsula in every part, from the Pyrenees to the Pillars of Hercules, was filled with mourning, and with all the horrors of a war carried on on both sides with unexampled cruelty, the Madrid gazette spoke of public diversions, and public projects, as if the people of that metropolis, like the Parisians, were to be amused with plans of imaginary works, and entered into the affairs of the theatre and opera regardless of the miseries of their country. Needy as the intrusive Government was, it kept these places of amusement open, in the spirit of Parisian policy, taking its erroneous estimate of human nature from man in his most corrupted state: but the numbers of the audience, and the accounts of the theatres, were no longer published as in other times. Schemes of education were hinted at, and for the encouragement of literature, . . . the unction which such men as Cabarrus and Urquijo laid to their souls. Canals were projected, when couriers were not safe even at the gates of the capital; and the improvement of agriculture was announced, while circulars were sent to the generals and military governors, urging them to prevent the destruction of the vines and olive trees by the troops; and promising that this ruinous course should not be continued, if the peasants would be careful always to provide fuel of their own cutting.