

CHAP. posal of the French, joyfully exchanged for an equal number of
 XXXVIII. his own men.

1811.

May 22.

At this time the Intruder went to Paris, for the ostensible purpose of being present at the baptism of Buonaparte's son. Mina was on the watch to incommode him, as he said, upon his journey; but this wretched man was too well aware of the danger not to take every possible precaution, and occupied every place along the road with a strong force before he ventured to advance. Mina had still his eye upon this road; and shortly afterwards, when 6000 of the enemy from Pamplona and Tudela were about to make a combined movement for the purpose of dislodging him from Estella, he abandoned that place to them, as if in fear of their numbers, and with the whole of his force entered the province of Alava. He himself, with three of his four battalions and the cavalry, reached Orbizu, the first village in that province, on the morning of the next day; the fourth proceeded by a different route. Here he received information that Massena was expected at Vitoria, on his way to France, with an escort of 2000 men, after his defeat at Fuentes d'Onoro. The hope of meeting with one who had been called the Child and Favourite and Angel of Victory delighted Mina, and he set off immediately in hopes of intercepting him; but Cruchaga, overcome by an illness against which he had borne up for many days, was most reluctantly compelled to remain behind.

At five in the evening of the 24th they reached the Puerto de Azazeta, and halted there till it was dark, lest they should be seen by the enemy or some of his scouts, in passing some plains which were at no great distance from Vitoria. Mina would not enter any village on his way, for the French, under pain of rigorous punishment, had enjoined all persons to give intelligence of his movements; and he was careful not to compromise the people. On the 25th, at four in the morning, he reached

Arlaban, the mountain which forms the boundary between Alava and Guipuzcoa, and here he chose his ground, placing one battalion in the woods on the left of the road, two on the right, and the cavalry upon the plain; the fourth he meant to station in a grove when it should arrive, from whence it might surprise the enemy's rear-guard. There was a little village near, about six miles only from Vitoria; and, that no information might be given by any of the inhabitants, he marched them all off, old and young, into the mountains, and placed a guard over them, ordering them to remain quiet for eight hours as they valued their lives.

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Soon after these preparations were made, a messenger reached him with news that Massena had arrived at Vitoria, and would halt there; but that a great convoy was on the point of setting out, with a general in one coach, a colonel and lieutenant-colonel and two women in another, 1100 prisoners, and an escort of 2000 foot and 200 horse. The hope of delivering the prisoners repaid him for the disappointment of his design against Massena. Not trusting too implicitly to the messenger, for fear of deceit, he ordered him to be bound to a point of the rock, and placed a guard over him, who was to put him to death if he attempted to escape, but he promised him a munificent reward if his information should be verified. They were not long in suspense. About eight o'clock the enemy's van appeared, . . . 100 foot and twenty horse, who were allowed to pass unmolested; a second party of thirty foot and twelve horse passed in like manner, that Mina might not, by giving the alarm too early, lose his object. The main body came next with the prisoners, a number of carts laden with plunder, and one of the coaches. A fire was opened upon them from the left by one battalion, and the two others rushed out upon them from the right. The prisoners threw themselves upon the ground that they might not fall by the

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hands of their friends ; then joyfully ran to join their deliverers. Mina went to the coach, for the purpose of saving its passengers ; the two officers, however, refusing to surrender, defended themselves with their sabres ; one was killed ; Colonel Lafitte, the other, was wounded and made prisoner with the women. The French, though thrown at first into confusion and dreadfully cut up, formed with the celerity of well-disciplined and experienced troops ; 600 foot and 100 horse brought up the rear with the other coach : upon the first fire the coach was driven back to Vitoria, escorted by the horsemen ; the infantry remained and got possession of a height, from whence they annoyed the Spaniards, who were now completing their victory. Two hundred men from the garrison of Salinas came to their succour, but they were dislodged and driven to the gates of Salinas. Mina's fourth battalion did not arrive till the business was done ; the men had made a forced march of fifteen hours and were fasting, nevertheless they joined in the pursuit. By this time reinforcements came to the enemy from Vitoria, and the French in Salinas being joined by part of the garrison of Mondragon, and of all the neighbouring posts, again showed themselves. Mina drove them back, and then thought it advisable to secure what he had gained ; the affair had continued five hours, and his men had neither eaten nor drank since ten in the morning of the preceding day ; he therefore retired with his spoils to Zalduendo, six hours' distance from the field.

The French lost their whole convoy and above 1000 men, of whom about 110 only were made prisoners. Among the slain was Valbuena, who, having formerly been aid-de-camp to Castaños, had entered the Intruder's service, and distinguished himself by his cruelty to his own countrymen. The booty was very great : Mina reserved one load of specie for the public service, and his men took what they could find, many loading

themselves with gold, .. the plunder which their enemies were conveying to France. The peasants' artillery was tried on this day for the second time with excellent effect; at the first discharge it brought down above twenty of the French, and on the second dispersed a column which had formed in the road. The loss of the Spaniards was inconsiderable, but D. Pedro Bizarro, who that day commanded the cavalry, was dangerously hurt, to the great grief of Mina and all his comrades. Many women were taken, they were treated with respect, and set at liberty. Among the Spaniards who were delivered were twenty-one officers; Garrido was one, the leader of a Guerrilla party in Castille.

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Mina's first care was to place the rescued prisoners in safety, and this could only be done by getting them into Valencia. For this purpose he sent to Duran and the Empecinado to cooperate with him, and pass along the banks of the Ebro in order to protect their passage; but Duran was too far distant, and the Empecinado was at this time closely pressed by the enemy; he had therefore nothing to rely on but himself. Accordingly he made preparations for throwing a bridge over the river, and named the place where it was to be done; the materials were sent towards this place, and he moved in the same direction: then in the middle of the night turning aside marched to a part of the river twelve miles distant, tried the depth by forcing his own horse into the water, and making each of his cavalry take up a man behind him, in this manner landed the whole in safety, while the enemy were waiting to attack him when he should be employed in making his bridge.

Next his band was heard of at Irun, when D. Jose Gorriz, who, according to the Maccabean system, had succeeded his kinsman in the command of the third battalion, forming a junction with the fourth under Ulzurrun, marched against that place, defeated the

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garrisons of Oyarzun and Beriату, got possession of the stores of the Intrusive government at Irun, and burnt the bridge which the French had constructed over the Bidasoa, which there separates France from Spain; after which they returned with their booty, though all the force of the adjoining posts was collected to oppose them. Greater and more persevering efforts were now made to destroy him. Caffarelli arrived to take the command in Biscay, and his first object was to signalize himself by the destruction of an enemy, for whose blood Buonaparte thirsted as he had thirsted for that of Schill and of Hofer. Mina was in the village of Mendigorria with three of his battalions and his cavalry, when Caffarelli with one division came against him by Puente la Reyna, another by the Valle de Echaurri; Reille advanced with a third by Carrascal, and a fourth moved from Logroño upon Estella. The whole force in motion against him amounted to 8000 foot and 2000 horse. Mina put himself in ambush near Carrascal, meaning to attack Reille; he engaged him, and forced him to retire upon Tafalla: but when the Guerrilla chief had advanced in pursuit as far as the village of Barasoain, he discovered that Caffarelli, marching back from Puente, had contrived to cut off the battalion which he himself commanded; and place it between two fires. Reille and Caffarelli then, whose joint force amounted to 700 horse and 4000 foot, attacked him with as great advantage of ground as of numbers, and Mina for the moment expected to see six of the seven companies of his battalion cut off. Their desperate courage brought them off with the loss of twenty-three killed and eighty taken; a heavy loss, but far less than there had been cause to dread, . . . and for which in the action they had revenged themselves. He himself was in the most imminent peril: a party of hussars surrounded him, and one of them aimed a blow which he had no other means of avoiding but by stretching

himself out upon his horse; the horse at the same moment sprung forward and threw him; he recovered his feet and ran; the horse, . . . whether by mere good fortune, or that, in the wild life to which Mina was reduced, like an Arab he had taught the beast to love him, . . . followed his master, who then lightly leaped into his seat, and, though closely pursued, saved himself.

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He got to Lerga with his men; Reille marched to Tafalla, Caffarelli to Monreal; each division being thus three hours' distance from him. The next day he moved to Sanguesa, and rested there the whole day. On the morrow he was apprized that Caffarelli was approaching Lumbier and Reille Caceda, both points within two hours of him: upon this he sent his cavalry along the river Aragon to call off their attention in that direction, while with the infantry he took his route for the mountains of Biqueza. The two hostile divisions followed him, one on the right, the other on the left, hoping again to place him between two fires; he had the start of them only half an hour, and having gained the mountain, put his men in order to defend the post; but in the evening the enemy moved off, meaning to take him at more advantage, and he reached the village of Veguezal. This was on the 16th of June; the next day he was informed that Caffarelli and Reille, with the French from the district of the Cinco Villas, would attack him on the 18th on the three sides of the Puerto, Navascues, and Tiermas: he eluded them all by marching to Iruzozgui. Caffarelli followed him as far as Artieda, which was an hour and a half's distance. Mina was not informed of this; they met on the way to Aoiz; the Spaniards had the good fortune to gain a strong position upon some heights, where they were able to repulse the enemy, notwithstanding his forces were double in number, with the loss of more than 300 killed. This gained them a day's respite from their pursuers: on the 20th they learnt that Reille

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had again joined Caffarelli, and Mina once more resolved to divide his force, and thus multiply the chances of escape. Cruchaga, with the second battalion, took his course toward Roncesvalles, and he, with the first and third, marched for Zubiri. On his way he learnt that the French in Aoiz had been 6000 foot and 700 horse, who were now thus disposed of; 4000 were marching to Zubiri, 2000 with 400 horse to the town of Urroz, and Reille with 300 horse was gone to Pamplona; 200 who had escorted the wounded were also on their way to Zubiri with a supply of ammunition. Fearful as this intelligence was, his men ate their rations with composure, and then amidst incessant rain turned to Larrainzar; . . . from thence he sent his third battalion to Bustan, and he himself, with the remaining one, marched for the village of Illarse. His own danger was not diminished by this separation, for it seemed of more importance to the enemy to secure his single person than to destroy the troop; they followed close upon the scent: from Illarse they pursued him to Villaneuva in Araguil, where he arrived at night, and from whence he set out at two in the morning: as little was he able to rest at Echarri Aranaz; from thence, through the Puerto de Tizatraga, he made for the Puerto de Lezaun; still they were close upon him; he got on to Los Arcos, and the enemy halted at Estella, twelve miles distant.

The French had formed their plan for hunting him down with perfect knowledge of the country, meaning to hem him in on all sides among the mountains; and they had assembled not only all their troops in Navarre for this service, but had drawn soldiers from Alava also, and from part of Castille, and were aided by reinforcements from France. Not less than 12,000 men were now employed against him. Mina, however, knew the ground as well as his pursuers, and never losing hope, and never without resources, he once more divided his men into small moveable

columns, which he dispersed among the mountains in contrary directions, but with such instructions, that whenever a favourable opportunity arrived, the re-union might be effected as rapidly as before. The French were thus compelled either to extend their line so far that their strength would not be sufficient to cover it, or else to keep it together without any object upon which they could bring it to bear. As he expected, they found themselves at fault, and before they knew how to act, or where to seek him, he had re-united his three battalions and all his cavalry in Estella, where Cruchaga, with the other battalion, hastened to join him, after having attacked the enemy in Roncesvalles, killed and wounded twenty-five of them, and driven the rest into their fort.

Mina's reputation was greatly raised by the ability with which he extricated himself from so many dangers, and the loss which he so frequently inflicted upon the enemy; but these persevering efforts of the French had the desired effect of rendering it impossible for him to undertake any enterprise which might tend to the relief of Figueras, or, by disturbing Suchet in Aragon, operate in aid of Tarragona. That city, one of the most remarkable in Spain for its monuments of antiquity, and for the historical circumstances connected with it, stands about the distance of a musket shot from the sea shore, on a steep and rocky eminence, where (in the words of Florez) it commands and enjoys a free air, a clear sky, and its own fertile plain. Its foundation being in an age beyond the reach of history, has been variously ascribed to Tubal, Hercules, Teucer, Remus, a king of Egypt, and a colony of Phocæans, by fblers who sought in their inventions to gratify that allowable and useful pride which citizens learn to take in the place of their birth and abode . . . or to accredit their own theories, or to support some baseless etymology of its name. This alone is certain, that it was a considerable place before the Romans and

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Suchet,
T. 2. 20.
Tarragona.

España Sa-
grada, T.
24. p. 69.

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Ycart.
Grandezus
de Tarrago-
na, 65.

Laborde
Voyage Pit-
toresque.
Introd.
p. 31.

Suetonius.

Orosius,
L. 7. § 15.

Carthaginians contended for the dominion of Spain; and the remains of its more ancient walls, which excited the wonder of antiquaries in the sixteenth century, excite in the present age their sagacity, their conjectures, and their doubts; for, though resembling those which are called Cyclopean in magnitude and solidity, they differ from them in construction. The Scipios so greatly enlarged and embellished it as almost to be considered its refounders; and, on the division of the Peninsula under the Romans, it gave name to that province which had before been called Citerior Spain. Augustus, according to fond Spaniards, issued from Tarragona his ever memorable decree that all the world should be taxed; here it was that the palm was said to have grown upon his altar during his life; and the year after his death the inhabitants sent deputies to Rome, soliciting permission to erect a temple to him as a god:.. a fragment of that altar, a single stone of that temple, and a few medals, are now the only remains of their vile and impious adulation. When Galba was declared emperor, the crown of gold for his inauguration was taken from the temple of Jupiter in this city. The Egyptian Isis was worshipped here, and the African goddess Cœlestis: and when the Romish church had corrupted Christianity with the polytheism and idolatry of Pagan Rome, changing the names, but retaining the superstition, the craft, and the sin, it was then inferred that Santiago *must* have sanctified Tarragona by his presence, it being certain that he was at Zaragoza when our Lady descended there with the pillar from heaven. When the Barbarians in the reign of Gallienus first entered Spain, Tarragona was reduced by them almost to a heap of ruins; and it was the last place in that country which the Romans retained. Many of the Gothic kings coined money there. It underwent a second destruction from the Moors, in revenge for the resolution with which the inhabitants resisted them. Louis the Pious recovered it from them at the beginning of the 9th cen-