

with men who sought only personal aggrandizement and the opportunities for place and power.

The result of the coalition of such conflicting elements may be read in the rapid succession of events, one military leader succeeding another, and, fired by jealousy and the dread of rivalry, summarily disposing of his predecessor. The popular idol of to-day may tomorrow be a victim to his own superiority, as envy, like death, loves a shining mark. His place in history cannot be augured from his fate at the hands of his countrymen. Time avenges all such, and many who were executed as traitors are now revered as martyrs, their dust the choicest treasure of the Grand Cathedral and San Fernando. The strife in which they lived is past; the passions to which they were sacrificed are stilled forever, and only their great deeds survive. They live in the hearts of their countrymen, and in every part of the republic their memorials are to be found in the forms of mural tablet or shaft.

The facilities now offered for travel in Mexico place within the reach of all who desire it, the privilege of visiting in person the historic places mentioned in this connection; and at almost every turn of the railway the eye may rest upon some evidence of a sanguinary contest or memorial of stirring event.

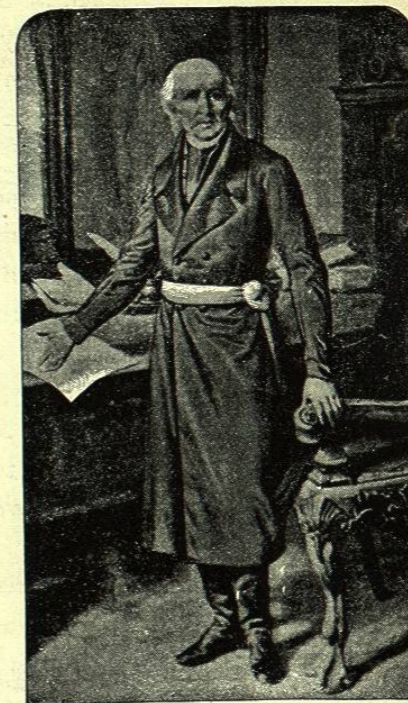
It was my pleasure and privilege to make pilgrimages to many of these places, and often while gazing upon shaft or cross my heart has been thrilled as I recalled the unparalleled struggles of the Mexican people for liberty.

"HIDALGO, THE WASHINGTON OF MEXICO."

Let us turn for a moment to the first scene in the grand drama for liberty.

The hour is midnight. The inhabitants are wrapped in a calm and delightful repose. The gray-headed veteran and the child with golden curls—youth and innocence, old age and infirmity—are alike in profound slumber, in blissful unconsciousness of the coming storm. It is in the unpretentious town of Dolores—suggestive name! The

streets are quiet, but a glance toward the little church, henceforward to become in verity the Mexican Faneuil Hall and cradle of liberty, reveals dimly the outlines of men moving stealthily about in the gloom. They gather at length in a group around a central figure arrayed in priestly garb, a slender form telling of abstinence. See his eyes beaming dove-like gentleness and benediction! See the warrior-soul slumbering in the meek priest! See those eyes, once filled with woman-like gentleness, transformed to balls of fire that burn into the hearts of men, enthusing them with his own terrible thoughts! The eagle-glances that pierce the semi-darkness blaze into the dusky countenances of his followers! He waves his thin white hands, so oft engaged in supplication and in eloquent gesture, aiding his sacred oratory, as in words that burn he denounces the oppressor. The priest is a warrior now; the hand that has been so often raised in gentle benediction now strikes in wild gesture as though it held a sword. It would have blessed—it is now ready to smite!



THE PATRIOT HIDALGO.

Thus stood the venerable Miguel Hidalgo on the night of the 15th of September, 1810, as in animated tones he addressed his Indian allies, concluding with the exhilarating cry, "VIVA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE!" "VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA!" The banner of revolt is raised above their heads; he makes the sign of the cross, murmurs a prayer, and the humble *cura* of Dolores moves down the narrow street in front of his bronze adherents, releasing captives,

thus adding to their ranks, and in turn placing in captivity the leading Spaniards.

Ere the morning sun shed his first beams on the streets of Dolores, the bells pealed forth melodiously at so early an hour as to cause surprise to all within hearing. Soon the residents of the town and people from the adjacent *pueblos* were seen gathering around the portals of the church they loved so well. The *cura* is there, but not to celebrate the mass on this Sunday morning; for the work of revolution has already begun. From the pulpit he addresses that Indian multitude as "My dear children," and urges them to rend asunder the despised yoke of tyranny and to reclaim the property and lands stolen from their ancestors. "To-day we must act! Will you, as patriots, defend your religion and your rights?" "We will defend them," shouts the crowd. "*Viva nuestra Señora de Guadalupe!*" and "Death to the bad government! Death to the Gachupines!" "Live, then, and follow your *cura* who has ever watched over your welfare," is the reply of Hidalgo.

The *cura* of Dolores has addressed his congregation for the last time; and though bravely and resolutely determined to meet the issue without faltering, the thought is a painful one. Heretofore he has warned them to flee from the wrath to come, administered the holy sacrament and signed them with the cross in baptism; henceforward, in this new crusade against oppression and usurpation, he is their leader to victory or death!

Miguel Hidalgo y Costillo was the second son of his parents, who lived in the province of Guanajuato.

From his early youth he was a close student, and when still quite young he had attained considerable proficiency in philosophy, and also in his theological studies in the College of San Nicolas in Valladolid. He received his degree of bachelor of theology at the capital, and was appointed successively to the curacy of two wealthy parishes in the diocese of Valladolid. The death of his brother was the means of his appointment as *cura* of Dolores, which gave him a salary of about twelve thousand dollars a year. He became a scien-

tist, philosopher, and political economist, and was, besides, a linguist of high order. He invested his means in various ways; grew silkworms, planted grape-vines, put into successful operation a porcelain factory, and many other industries for the advancement of the people about him.

When the sphere of his knowledge is considered, he is found to have possessed an amount of information far in advance of his contemporaries, while his social and conversational gifts were exceptionally fine.

Hidalgo was fifty-eight years old when he raised the *grito*, but he had been long maturing the plan that finally triumphed over all obstacles.

We now return to Dolores, where the disaffected had already swelled into a formidable insurgent force. From thence they proceeded to San Felipe, gathering reinforcements by the way. They next surprised San Miguel, arriving at dark. They were received enthusiastically by the population, and proceeded without bloodshed to arrest the Spaniards; Allende, who was Hidalgo's chief support, and a brave officer, assuring them that no harm should come to them. A cheer was raised for independence, the colonel taken prisoner, and a thousand royalist troops added to the insurgent army. Here they procured the picture of the Virgin Guadalupe, which was transferred to their banner to lead them to victory.

They next advanced on Guanajuato, a city of seventy thousand inhabitants, the capital of the province, and the emporium of the Spanish treasures. Only thirty miles from the starting-point at Dolores, but in this short distance, the gentle zephyr of insurrection had become a perfect hurricane of revolution, and though the arms of the insurgents were so rude and miscellaneous in character, consisting of clubs, stones, *machetes*, arrows, lances and heavy swords, they did not hesitate to oppose themselves to the trained and armed Spanish garrison, and were victorious through enthusiasm and force of numbers.

Here Hidalgo remained for ten days, during which he proclaimed

the independence of Mexico, and had himself elected Captain-General of America and Commander-in-chief of the army. The treasure, said to have amounted to five million dollars, provided him with the sinews of war.

We next see him at Valladolid, carrying all before him with the same violence and excessive severity as at Guanajuato. About this time he was joined by Morelos, also a priest, and a former pupil at San Nicolas, where Hidalgo had been regent. He had heard of the revolution, and in October hastened to ascertain the truth concerning it from Hidalgo. He traveled a long distance before overtaking him, but when assured that his sole aim was the independence of Mexico, full of patriotism and reverence for his old teacher, Morelos tendered his services, and received a verbal commission to organize an army and arouse interest in the southwest. This was their last meeting. The grand old college of San Nicolas had nurtured them both, and given an impetus to their endowments which would render both famous.

After the departure of Morelos, Hidalgo proceeded toward the capital, then under the command of the viceroy Venegas. With his large army of undisciplined Indians he began the march, and reached Monte las Cruces on the 30th of the month, and there encountered the Spanish forces, commanded by Truxillo and Iturbide. Here for the first time the raw recruits of Hidalgo came in contact with cannon. It is said that the Indians, in their frenzy, rushed forward and clapped their straw hats over the muzzles of the guns, hoping to evade the death-dealing missiles.

In this engagement, Hidalgo, though victorious, lost heavily. He then went within sight of the city, but declined to enter, though urged by Allende to do so. The victory of Las Cruces had been so dearly bought that another such would have been certain ruin.

Although at this time Hidalgo had cannon captured from the enemy, and his forces were in a more soldierly condition than ever before, nevertheless at the bridge of Calderon he was defeated by General Calleja. He then determined to retreat to the north, and with

his best officers and several thousand men reached Saltillo in January, 1811. Leaving Rayon in command, he concluded to hasten to the United States to purchase military equipments with which to cope successfully with the efficient Spanish troops. He reached the Texas boundary with a large sum of money, when he was betrayed by Elizondo,* a former friend and compatriot, and taken a prisoner to the city of Chihuahua.

The triumphs of his brief career were as marvelous as his defeat was signal and irretrievable. Henceforward the floor of his prison cell must be the theater for the closing scenes of his eventful life. No hope of escape could penetrate those low, gray, pitiless walls! Defeat and captivity have transformed him, and he turns once more to his early vocation. The intrepid warrior is again the gentle priest! The eagle glance which enthused the hearts of his countrymen is once more softened in dove-like gentleness and benediction! The hand that smote is now raised in supplication as he implores Divine support and guidance. As he paces to and fro, he surveys the bloody path over which he led his victorious army, and while the retrospect discloses ghastly horrors, he pleads, in extenuation, grim necessity; but his undaunted spirit glows afresh as he recalls his glorious successes. He has opened the path to freedom, and the *grito* of Dolores will not cease to reverberate over the mountains and plains of Mexico until the work of liberation, begun by him and his compatriots, is completed.

In the long trial that followed, even the chains and shackles could not detract from the dignity and patience that characterized him.

On the 27th of July Dr. Valentine, as delegated by Bishop Olivares of Durango, pronounced the sentence by which Hidalgo was degraded from the priesthood. On the 29th he was summoned before the ecclesiastical tribunal, clad in clerical garb, and relieved of his fetters for the first time since his incarceration. He was then arrayed in the

*The treachery of Elizondo was avenged when in 1813 he went on an expedition to Texas and was mortally wounded, when in bed, by one of his lieutenants. He died on the bank of the San Marcos River, September, 1813.

vestments of his holy office. While on his knees before the representative of the bishop, he listened to the explanation of the causes which led to this painful and humiliating scene. He was then stripped of his sacerdotal garments, and turned over to the civil authorities, after which he was again shackled and taken to his cell.

Ere the first streak of dawn, on July 31, 1811, Hidalgo was summoned to prepare for the closing scene. With the utmost serenity he partook of his last breakfast. He then declared his readiness to go with the guards, and assured them of his forgiveness. So heavily ironed that he could scarcely walk, his courage and fortitude did not for an instant fail him. He even remembered and asked for some sweets left under his pillow, and divided them among the soldiers. The sun had not yet risen and orders had been given that his head should not be mutilated, so he calmly placed his hand over his heart, as a guide for their aim. A platoon fired, wounding only his hand; Hidalgo remained motionless, but continued in prayer. Another volley severed the cords that held him to his seat, and he fell, though still breathing. Life was only extinguished when the soldiers had fired three more volleys near his breast, the veneration in which he was held doubtless interfering with the accuracy of their aim. Heroic to the last, thus died Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, and the fame of the Washington of Mexico, as he is called, grows brighter with succeeding generations.

Allende, Jimenez, Aldama, and Santa Maria had met the deaths of martyrs to the cause of liberty on June 26. The next day Chico and three others were shot, all meeting their death bravely, though forced to kneel like traitors and receive the fire of the musketry in their backs. Those who were priests were first stripped of their sacerdotal robes; then, after death, each one was dressed in the habit of his order and laid away with becoming respect.

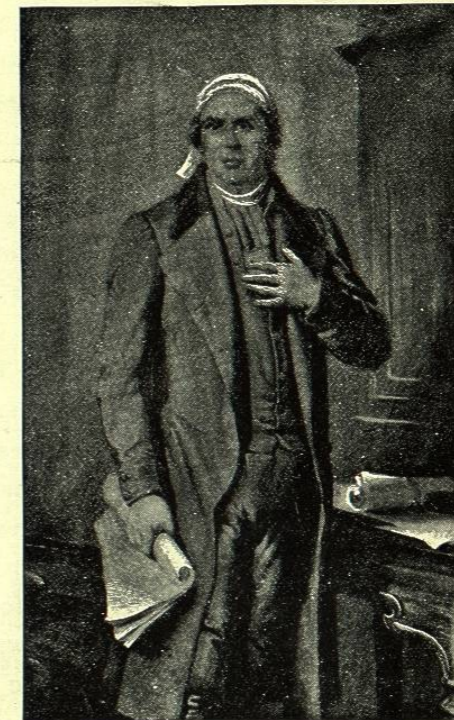
The heads of Hidalgo, Allende, Jimenez, and Aldama were placed in the four angles of the public storehouse in Guanajuato. Their bodies, however, were deposited in the chapel of the Franciscans, where they remained until 1823, when Congress ordered them, with

their heads, to be placed in the cathedral at the capital with all the honors a grateful country could bestow.

JOSÉ MARIA MORELOS.

The death of Hidalgo left the leadership to Morelos, then operating in the southwest, whose superior genius designated him as a fitting successor. Posterity delights in knowing the birthplace of distinguished men, but on this point authorities differ with regard to Morelos. Some claim Valladolid, others Apatzingan; but from his having spent a great part of his early youth in and near the former city, it is generally conceded to be the place of his nativity. His youth and early manhood were passed in hardy outdoor occupation, and although he was studious and ambitious, it was not until the age of thirty-two that he entered the college of San Nicolas, where he studied philosophy under Hidalgo, and, in accordance with his inclination, prepared for the priesthood. He became *cura* of different small towns near by, and his frugal habits enabled him at a later period to purchase a plain home in Valladolid.

At the time of becoming a soldier Morelos was forty-five years old. On receiving his commission from Hidalgo he went to his curacy and there collected twenty-five trustworthy men, whom he armed with muskets, and began the march to the southwest. I have looked on much of that barren territory of several hun-



JOSÉ MARIA MORELOS.