

believe he had the power to save her, and he therefore did not hesitate to undertake so sacred a duty.

The latter part of the year 1820 was devoted to this great undertaking, and the whole energies of his mind were bent to organizing and perfecting a plan for separating the viceroyalty of Mexico from the crown of Spain. Disregarding the successful examples of other nations in which reformatations and revolutions had been accomplished only at the expense of anarchy and bloodshed and civil war, he attempted the utterance of a plan that should conciliate contrarieties of opinion, overcome prejudices, and compromise all classes more or less to its support, and thus avoid the horrors of a servile insurrection and the calamities of domestic war.

A few months only were sufficient for the accomplishment of his labours, and on the 21st of February, 1821, he published to the world his immortal plan for the separation of Mexico from the mother-government, and its erection into an independent empire. In this short period he had not only formed the outlines of his project, and enlisted the various contending factions in its support, but procured its ratification by most of the departments of the nation. A more interesting or satisfactory account of the motives that led to the adoption of the sagacious and beneficent "plan of Iguala" cannot be given, than is found in Iturbide's own words, which are as follows:—

"In tracing out this project, (says he,) my aim was to give independence to my country—because such was the general desire of the Americans; a desire founded on natural feelings and on principles of justice. It was, besides, the only means by which the interests of the two nations could be secured. The Spaniards would not allow themselves to be convinced that their decline began with their acquisition of the colonies, while the colonists were fully persuaded that the time of their emancipation had arrived."

The plan of Iguala speaks for itself; and, although there were some radical errors in its doctrines and guarantees, yet, as a whole, it was wisely conceived for the accomplishment of the great and legitimate object of its author—the promotion of the interests and happiness of the Mexican people. It was as follows:

PLAN OF IGUALA.

ART. 1. The Mexican nation is independent of the Spanish nation, and of every other, even on its own continent.

ART. 2. Its religion shall be the Catholic, which all its inhabitants profess.

ART. 3. They shall be united, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

ART. 4. The government shall be a constitutional monarchy.

ART. 5. A junta shall be named, consisting of individuals who enjoy the highest reputation in the different parties which have shown themselves.

ART. 6. This junta shall be under the presidency of his excellency the Count del Venadito, the present Viceroy of Mexico.

ART. 7. It shall govern in the name of the nation, according to the laws now in force, and its principal business shall be to convoke, according to such rules as it shall deem expedient, a Congress, for the formation of a constitution more suitable to the country.

ART. 8. His majesty Ferdinand VII. shall be invited to the throne of the empire, and in case of his refusal, the Infantes Don Carlos and Don Francisco de Paula.

ART. 9. Should his majesty Ferdinand VII. and his august brothers decline the invitation, the nation is at liberty to invite to the imperial throne any member of reigning families whom it may select.

ART. 10. The formation of the constitution by the Congress, and the oath of the emperor to observe it, must precede his entry into the country.

ART. 11. The distinction of castes is abolished, which was made by the Spanish law, excluding them from the rights of citizenship. All the inhabitants of the country are citizens and equal, and the door of advancement is open to virtue and merit.

ART. 12. An army shall be formed for the support of religion, independence, and union, guaranteeing these three principles, and therefore shall be called the army of the three guarantees.

ART. 13. It shall solemnly swear to defend the fundamental bases of this plan.

ART. 14. It shall strictly observe the military ordinances now in force.

ART. 15. There shall be no other promotions than those that are due to seniority, or which shall be necessary to the good of the service.

ART. 16. This army shall be considered as of the line.

ART. 17. The old partisans of independence who shall immediately adhere to this plan, shall be considered as individuals of this army.

ART. 18. The patriots and peasants who shall adhere to it hereafter, shall be considered as provincial militia men.

ART. 19. The secular and regular priests shall be continued in the state in which they now are.

ART. 20. All the public functionaries—civil, ecclesiastical, political, and military, who adhere to the cause of independence, shall be continued in their offices, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

ART. 21. Those functionaries, of whatever degree and condition, who dissent from the cause of independence, shall be divested of their offices, and shall quit the territory of the empire, taking with them their families and their effects.

ART. 22. The military commandants shall regulate according to the general instructions in conformity with this plan, which shall be transmitted to them.

ART. 23. No accused person shall be condemned capitally by the military commandants. Those accused of treason against the nation, which is the next greatest crime after that of treason to the Divine Ruler, shall be conveyed to the fortress of Barrabas, where they shall remain until the Congress shall resolve on the punishment which ought to be inflicted on them.

ART. 24. It being indispensable to the country that this plan should be carried into effect, inasmuch as the welfare of that country is its object, every individual of the army shall maintain it to a shedding, if it be necessary, of the last drop of his blood.

Town of Iguala,  
24th February, 1821.

The proffer of the crown of the new empire to the reigning family of Spain, was calculated to secure the approbation of the Spanish loyalists, and conciliate the royal family; and had the latter consulted their true interests, the dignity of the Spanish nation, and the happiness of the Mexican people, the offer would not have been rejected. The guarantee of the Catholic, as the national religion, although in the abstract improper, was nevertheless a wise provision in this instance; for to have made war upon the church, or even neglect its interests, was to enlist an opposition that would have destroyed the whole object of the measure. And while there was offered to the Americans the privilege of enacting their own laws, and participating in all the benefits of the government, there was also guaranteed to the Spaniard a peaceful home, and adequate protection to person and property.

The greatest, and perhaps the only error (under the circumstances) of the new organization, which foreshadowed calamitous results, consisted in the provision which abolished all

distinction of castes, and placed all individuals, whether Americans, Spaniards, Africans, or Indians, on equal political footing. It is true, this feature had the effect to conciliate the prejudices and overcome the jealousies of the lower classes, but could the same ends have been peacefully accomplished without its adoption, many evils that have since resulted in Mexico might have been averted. The half-civilized masses in that country, unaccustomed to self-control and the reflection necessary to the judicious exercise of the high attributes of freemen, were entirely unprepared for the change, and, as a natural consequence, their political liberty degenerated into political licentiousness.

Here, again, the author takes the liberty of quoting the eloquent language of Iturbide, in reference to the result of the plan of Iguala, and the consummation of his labours.

“The operation of putting the plan into execution, (says he,) was crowned with the success which I had anticipated. Six months were sufficient to untwist the entangled knot that had bound the two worlds. Without blood-shed, without fire, robbery, devastation, without a tear, my country was free, and transformed from a colony into an empire.”

Those Europeans who desired to remain in the country were permitted to do so; and those who held offices, and cooperated in the patriotic effort for independence, were permitted to retain them. After the organization of the provisional government, the most liberal and capable Spaniards were elevated to the highest stations, and participated in all the honours and advantages of the new order of things. Those who preferred were permitted to leave the country, and often liberally aided in doing so; no violence was exhibited towards any who did not approve of the revolution, and their property and persons were respected.

But one thing remained to be done, to complete the perfect independence of the country, and establish the universal authority of the new government, which was the reduction of the royal government at the capital, or its acquiescence in the new organization. This step was honourably and peacefully accomplished on the 24th of August, 1821, by the treaty of Cordova, concluded between Don Juan O'Donoju, Lieutenant General of the armies of Spain, and Don Augustin de Iturbide, as “First Chief of the Imperial Mexican army of the Three Guarantees.” Of the authority of the contracting parties to make the treaty of Cordova, a single observation is only necessary. Iturbide, invested with the command of the imperial army, was before the capital, and could easily have reduced it; but, in the alternative he pursued, acted in accord-

ance with the sentiment of the Mexican people. And although O'Donoju was not invested with the special powers of entering into any particular convention, yet he was authorized in all cases to act in accordance with his judgment, for the interests of his sovereign; and, in this instance, he not only conformed to the sentiments of his command, and most of the royal officers in the country, but to the dictates of his own judgment of duty, and his determination no longer to oppose a revolution which had enlisted his sympathies, and he believed to be right. He knew it was in vain for him to contend with Iturbide, or his government to oppose the revolution. The Spanish yoke was already thrown off, and the general consulted the highest interests, if not the honour of his sovereign, when he assented to the plan of Iguala, and the stipulations of the treaty. If, by this means, he did not gratify the false pride of a family in whose hands he had placed the crown of the new empire, if they chose to accept it, he at least prevented the improvident expenditure of much blood and treasure on both sides.

The treaty provided for the recognition of the independence and sovereignty of Mexico; that the government should be a limited constitutional monarchy, and the throne occupied by an Emperor, who should fix his court at the city of Mexico. The third article, in accordance with the plan of Iguala, provided for the invitation of Ferdinand VII. to the throne; and, in case of his refusal or denial, of one of his august brothers, in the regular order of succession; and, in case of the refusal or denial of all these respectively, that the national cortes of the empire should designate the individual who should ascend the throne. By the sixth article, a "Provisional Junta of Government" was to be appointed, "composed of men the most eminent of the empire, for their virtues, their station, rank, fortune, and influence,—men marked out by the general opinion," whose number should be sufficiently large to insure wisdom of council and safety of action. It was also agreed that the Junta should elect its president, and appoint its regency, consisting of three individuals, distinguished for their ability and patriotism, who should govern in the name and on the behalf of the monarch, until the vacant throne should be filled. The regency was, immediately on its installation, to convoke the national cortes in the manner prescribed by the "Provisional Junta," and in accordance with the plan of Iguala. These provisions embraced the principal features of the treaty of Cordova; the other guarantees of the former plan were repeated, and some provisions of minor importance added. The general Don Juan O'Donoju, also agreed to despatch two

commissioners, with a copy of the treaty, and his representations thereon, to the court of Spain, which was complied with.

In conformity with the stipulations of the treaty, the Spanish forces capitulated on the 27th of September, and Iturbide entered the city of Mexico. On the same day he nominated the Junta of government, who were immediately installed, and forthwith entered upon the discharge of their official duties. To fill this body, men of the highest reputation were selected from all parties—it being the only chance, under the circumstances, of insuring concert of action, and obeying the direction of public sentiment.

The junta had no sooner convened, however, than the aspect was at once changed; this body, filled with persons aspiring to station and power, who were ignorant of the science of government, but each one of them professing peculiar views, and ostentatiously presenting them, soon fell into disputes, perverted the power with which they were clothed, and gave great offence to the country.

There were men at the capital, some of whom members of the Junta, who, entertaining private views of emolument, disliked Iturbide, on account of his general success and popularity, and were not slow to enter upon intrigues to destroy him. To this end the prejudices of two opposite factions were excited—the one constituting itself the republican, and the other the Bourbon party—united only in the single purpose of opposing the measures of Iturbide. The former coalesced in the opposition, because they knew that his objections to a republic were insurmountable, as he had repeatedly expressed them to the nation.

The Bourbonists, originally in favour of calling a Bourbon to the throne of the empire, after the refusal of the Spanish government to ratify the treaty of Cordova, and acknowledge the independence of Mexico, of course could no longer entertain the hope of realizing their original plans, and were in favour of returning to the allegiance of Spain.

At this period Iturbide wielded the power of the army, and was far the most popular man in the country: and against him, as the prominent leader in the new order of things, the whole force of the two factions was bent.

The first duty imposed on the Junta by the organic basis, required that body to frame a proclamation (*convocatoria*) for the assembling of a Congress to form a constitution for the monarchy, prescribing the manner of electing and the number of representatives to be sent by each department. The movements of the Junta were extremely tardy and unsatisfactory,

But after wasting a great deal of time a very defective convocatoria was presented; the representation was unequal, and calculated to give offence to some of the stronger departments, for while a population of fifty thousand, perhaps, were given an over large representation; a district, containing twice the number of inhabitants, and a much greater amount of wealth and civilization, was only entitled to one half as many deputies as the former.

The elections that took place, in pursuance of this proclamation, were the scenes of the most corrupt intrigues and villainous influences of the factions opposed to Iturbide. The members returned were composed, to a great extent, of prominent individuals hostile to his plans, and others so ignorant and servile, as to be made the ready tools of the leaders.

The first and principal duty of this congress was to frame a constitution for the empire, and provide means for sustaining the civil and military power of the government. Eight months passed away and none of these objects were attained; the constitution had not been touched—no financial measures were adopted, or likely to be; the organization of the judiciary was neglected, the administration of justice had fallen into disrepute, and civil anarchy existed throughout the country. The time was wasted in empty declamation; in making speeches on subjects foreign to the objects for which they were assembled, in discussing what honours or pensions should be paid to insurrectionary chiefs; what titles should be conferred on civil and ecclesiastical functionaries, and a hundred other subjects of no graver moment. The incompetency and folly of the congress rendered it the object of the contempt of the people; the public press exposed its faults, and one of the deputies, Don Lorenzo de Zavalla, since Vice-President of the Republic of Texas, stood up in his place and advocated its reform.

In the early part of 1822, the regency of government was composed of five members; the congress, in order to destroy the influence of Iturbide, who was the president of the regency, and his friends in that body, unwarrantably deposed three of the members, leaving one opposed to the president, and consequently annulling his influence and action in the executive capacity. The blow was intended for Iturbide, although the congress did not dare to make war directly upon, or attempt to depose him, from a fear of his popularity and influence with the army. The resolution, deposing the members of the regency, was not only a usurpation of power, not delegated to the legislature, but its adoption was most unjust and precipitate. Without discussion, the resolution was passed at a single sitting, and carried into immediate execu-

tion, notwithstanding it had been previously decreed by the congress, that every proposition should be read three times, at as many different sittings, before it should be discussed and passed upon. In connection with the resolution, it was also proposed to divorce the executive authority and the command of the army. But this proposition also aimed at Iturbide, and was intended to compel him to relinquish either his seat in the regency, or the command of the army, was lost only for want of time.

Nearly two months had elapsed after the regents were deposed; the popular indignation against the congress was aroused to its highest pitch; anarchy, if not domestic revolution, threatened in the interior, and the clamours of the army were becoming daily more alarming. Every body distrusted the congress, and the departments were urging Iturbide to dissolve that body, if necessary, by force of arms. The people saw that nothing could be expected from the congress, composed as it was of ambitious demagogues and factious men, who seemed determined to subserve their own purposes, without regard to the fundamental basis already agreed upon; in total contempt of the expressed will of the nation, and at the hazard of the independence of the country.

Stimulated by these circumstances, on the night of the 18th of May, 1822, the people and the garrison of the capital, proclaimed Iturbide the Emperor of Mexico. At the same instant as if by magic, the entire capital was in a blaze of light; the public square and private edifices were magnificently illuminated; the buildings were decorated with banners, and the balconies were filled with the most respectable inhabitants; every countenance seemed joyful, and the universal shout ascended—"Long live Augustin the First!" The streets presented a compact mass of human life; the city garrison, the officers of the army, the leading citizens of the metropolis, and many distinguished men from different sections of the country, thronged the vicinity of Iturbide's residence, and united in the general acclamation. Not a murmur of disapprobation was heard from any source; indeed, the members of the congress, and not all of those, were the only individuals at the capital who did not rejoice in the movement.

Although aware of his popularity, and expecting the movement of the people, Iturbide declared to his friends his determination to reject the proffered crown. But he was told by those, "that the movement at the capital was the exponent of the national will; and, to refuse compliance, would be to turn the popular excitement against himself, and to hazard the independence of the country; that anarchy threatened the

nation; the congress seemed bent on hastening its destruction and no other alternative was left; that he had started the ball of revolution, and given independence to the country; he was the author of the plan of Iguala, and had signed the guarantees of the treaty of Cordova that provided the alternative, now the only one left, which the people had adopted in proclaiming him emperor, and that to waver, or refuse to yield to their wishes, and carry out the only plan that could secure the blessings of peace was to sacrifice his labours, sacrifice his friends, and desert the cause of independence."

Whether Iturbide yielded with reluctance or not, to these solicitations of his friends, we have only his own statement. Most men, under similar circumstances, however ambitious for place or honour, would not be very likely to admit that they sought the crown which was offered them, and to which they had no hereditary title. There can be no doubt that the nation regarded him as worthy of it, and if any Mexican was entitled to it, from services rendered his country, it could not with justice, have been bestowed upon any other. At any rate, whatever may have been his scruples on the subject, they were so far overcome that he spent the remainder of the night of the 18th of May in quieting the people, and asking time for reflection before his final determination should be announced.

On the following day the regency was convened, and a full meeting present, the subject was presented to them and discussed; and it was unanimously determined that Iturbide should accede to the wishes of the people. The generals and superior officers of the army assembled, and united in the resolution of the regency. The president of the congress, who had received official intelligence of what had transpired, immediately summoned an extraordinary sitting of the congress. The regency and the convention of officers argued that it would be impossible to recede from the steps already taken; that an emperor was to be chosen, and that Iturbide was the man; and, having already dedicated himself to the country, they demanded his compliance with their wishes. Accordingly, both these bodies drew up memorials, addressed to the congress, requesting them to take the subject into consideration. These memorials were signed also by the president of the congress, and presented to that body.

When the deputies convened, the galleries and entrances were crowded with spectators; the place resounded with applause. In this important moment all was excitement, and the calm of deliberation was prevented. A deputation was immediately appointed to wait on Iturbide, and request his presence; the duty was executed, but Iturbide at first declined

to attend at the sitting, adding, that as the congress "were about to treat of him, personally, his presence might be considered as a restraint on the freedom of debate, and a clear and frank expression of each individual opinion." The deputation, however, with several general officers, returned to him, and insisted on his compliance with the invitation of the congress. He yielded to their persuasion, and while repairing, through the immense throng in the street, to the hall in which the deputies were sitting, the horses were removed from his carriage, and the vehicle drawn by the people to the doors of the place, amidst the shouts and vivas of the inhabitants; and, on his entrance, the acclamations were renewed with equal enthusiasm.

The resolution of the congress was immediately despatched to all the departments, towns, and garrisons, and without exception met with the entire approbation of them all. This was officially notified to the supreme government, with the assurances that the congress had, in that instance at least, gratified the desire of the nation, and that the departments would have instructed their deputies to offer the crown to Iturbide, but that they had sworn to support the plan of Iguala and treaty of Cordova, and they were not previously aware that the stipulation, guaranteeing the crown to the Bourbon family, had been rendered nugatory by the decree of the court of Madrid, and the contingency occurred, by which the Congress were permitted, and required to offer it to some other individual.

It will be proper here to state, that Brigadier Santa Anna, then a Colonel of infantry at Vera Cruz, was one of the first officers of the provincial garrisons who congratulated Iturbide, and in his dispatches to the latter, declared that he had himself made arrangements to proclaim him emperor at Vera Cruz, in case it had not been done at the city of Mexico. This fact is only worthy of remark, because, as subsequent events will show, this individual was the first to raise the standard of revolt against the government of the empire.

In confirmation of the vote by which Iturbide was elected emperor on the 19th of May, the congress, on the 22nd of June following, resolved, without a dissenting voice,—there being one hundred and nine members present,—that the crown should be hereditary in the family of Iturbide in lineal succession; that his eldest son, as heir apparent, should be entitled the "Prince of the Empire," his other sons designated as "Mexican Princes;" his father the "Prince of the Union," and his sister the "Princess de Iturbide." On the same occasion, the regulations for the Coronation were established, and all

these resolutions adopted without the restraint of the Emperor's presence; in the absence of the military and the populace: when the city was in perfect quiet; without compulsion or suggestion, but of their own accord and in perfect unanimity.

For some time after his accession to the throne, the country enjoyed an uninterrupted repose; the apprehensions of foreign invaders had passed away; the capital and the provinces were quiet, and the discontents of the factions in the congress seemed to have subsided. But little time elapsed, however, before the latent embers of discord were again fanned into a blaze; the congress repeated the scenes that preceded the coronation; clandestine meetings of its members, assembled to concoct conspiracies to overthrow the government, were detected; reports were circulated by these cabals—with the view to excite the fears of the timid republicans, and the jealousies of the aspiring Europeans—to the effect that Iturbide aimed at absolute power. The repeated charges of the conspirators were circulated in the interior; but neither the authorities nor the people believed them, and indeed disregarded them entirely, except to denounce the authors, and transmit to the capital the intelligence and proof of their treason.

Iturbide notified the congress officially, that certain of its members were charged with conspiracy and treason, and that body was requested to inquire into the facts. To this message no attention was given, the public tranquillity was again threatened; the discontents of the people were fearfully manifested; they regarded the congress with jealousy, and the Emperor determined on ordering the arrest of the principal deputies engaged in the conspiracy. This step has since been condemned by many persons, but was undoubtedly a prerogative of the Spanish monarch; and until it was abrogated by the new constitution of Mexico, was equally authoritative there as in Spain.

On the 26th of August, the deputies accused of treason were accordingly arrested, and the *prima facie* evidence of their guilt, (*sumaria*,) which had been collected by order of the council of State, placed upon the public records. The congress now became indignant and refractory, and demanded that the imprisoned deputies should be given up to them, for trial by their compeers. Iturbide refused compliance with this demand; because, as he alleged, the congress yet contained many other individuals suspected or charged with being participators in the crimes of which the arrested were accused, and it had disregarded the accusations against the same persons

previously preferred in his message, and refused to institute an investigation into their truth.

From the period of the arrest, up to the 30th of October, a constant contention existed between the congress and the Emperor. By this time the popular clamour was again aroused against the former, and that body was threatened with forcible dissolution. The provinces refused to grant any further pay to their representatives, on the ground that they did not discharge their duties. Several of them had repudiated the plan of Iguala, and the treaty of Cordova, from their places in the congressional palace, and were constantly fomenting disorder and discontent. The press and the political writers were again inveighing against the congress, which had become the contempt of the people. The position of affairs throughout the country, the indifference and wrangling of the deputies, demanded energetic action on the part of the government, which itself must come into contempt, if it longer permitted the vacillating and factious legislature to disgrace the nation.

On the 30th of October, the Emperor transmitted his despatch to the President, informing him that the congress over which he presided was dissolved; and, without excitement or violence of any kind, the session was thereupon terminated. From all parts of the country the same congratulations followed this act of the Emperor that succeeded his accession to the throne; no dissatisfaction was exhibited; but, on the contrary, official congratulations and confirmations of the act, were received from the various departments.

Santa Anna, who was one of the strongest adherents of Iturbide, and the first to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, held the station of commandant of the garrison of Vera Cruz, under Echavari, who was captain general of the province. Some jealousies and animosities sprang up between these two individuals, in reference to their respective authority, and Santa Anna attempted to procure the assassination of Echavari. In this he was baffled, and representations of the circumstance, with several other serious charges, were made against him to the Emperor, by the former captain general, the consul, the lieutenant colonel of his own regiment, and many of the most respectable inhabitants of Vera Cruz. At the same time Santa Anna visited Iturbide, at Jalapa, to answer the charges; the interview was unsatisfactory to the latter, as the proofs of his guilt greatly preponderated his defence, and in consequence he was deprived of his command. Falling into a violent paroxysm of passion at this result, he flew back to the garrison, and, by endorsing

the charges of the conspirators, who had attempted, and thus far failed, to overthrow the imperial government, succeeded in persuading the troops to join him, and raise the standard of revolt. At the city of Vera Cruz there was greater opposition to the new government than elsewhere, in consequence of the numerous and wealthy Spanish residents of the place, and hence the garrison were the more easily persuaded to revolt.

At the head of his rebel troops, Santa Anna advanced upon the towns of Alvarado and Antigua; these surrendered, and he made a rapid march to Jalapa, where he attacked the garrison, but was signally defeated, and compelled to retreat. The two former towns again placed themselves under the protection of the government. The forces of the Emperor were at this time very strong, and commanded by General Echavari and Brigadier Cortazar, who might have easily put down the rebellion, and taken possession of Vera Cruz. But, owing to the want of celerity in their movements, Santa Anna and his dispersed followers were enabled to reach the fortress of the city, which was defended by two hundred mulattoes, under command of Don Guadalupe Victoria. Troops, munitions, and money, in great abundance, were furnished Echavari, with orders to reduce the revolting garrison, and there was no obstacle to his success. The officers at Vera Cruz, including Santa Anna, had become alarmed for their safety, and were making arrangements to embark on board a vessel to escape from the enemy. Echavari, however, delayed terminating the rebellion, which a few days would have sufficed to quell, with the superior forces under his command: and, indeed, his apathy induced the garrison to hold out until the 2nd of February, when the act of Casa Mata was presented to, and accepted by both armies, which terminated the contest—the opposing forces uniting together, as then alleged, with no other object than to procure the re-establishment of the congress.

The conspiracies set on foot by the factious deputies were secretly fomented during the siege of Vera Cruz, the failure of which gave additional confidence to the conspirators. On the 1st of February, nearly two thousand troops had collected with the insurgent chiefs, and held their head quarters at Casa Mata. The Bourbonists and republicans had coalesced, and were in open opposition to the government, and the measures of the Emperor. At this place the convention of Casa Mata was agreed upon by the insurgent army. It provided that the congress should be reinstated, the provinces be permitted to return their "former deputies," with some few exceptions; that the person of his Majesty, the Emperor, should

be respected, as he was asserted to be in favour of national representation, and that copies of the convention should be forwarded to him. This act, agreed upon by two thousand insurgents, dictating to the country who might, or who should not, be elected to the congress; an act which acknowledged the rights and capacity of Iturbide as Emperor, and only purported to provide for the re-establishment of the congress, proved the overthrow of the imperial government.

As soon as the leaders at Vera Cruz had coalesced—Echavari turning traitor to the government—the combined forces overrun the provinces of Vera Cruz and Puebla. The Marquis de Vivaeco, commandant of Puebla, also joined in the movement; and two of the most powerful provinces were thus in open rebellion. The example influenced several others and they also agreed to the act of Casa Mata. At this juncture the Emperor placed himself at the head of the government forces, and marched out to meet the insurgents; and, on his reaching their vicinity, commissioners from the two armies met, and agreed upon a parley, until the national congress should be convened, in accordance with the new *convocatoria* framed by the "Instituent Junta," and that all differences between them should be decided by that body. During the parley, emissaries were sent to all the departments by the conspirators, to persuade them to conform to the act of Casa Mata.

Iturbide, in accordance with the agreement entered into with the commissioners, issued his proclamation for a new congress, which was convened. But finding that he had been deceived by the army, and deserted by some of his former friends, whose individual ambition had led them to oppose him: that the new congress was composed of the same individuals who were engaged in the insurrection, and that his longer continuance in a position which so greatly excited the envy and hostility of the ambitious aspirants who filled the congress, would be productive of no good to the country, or satisfaction to himself, he determined forthwith to abdicate the throne, and ask permission of the congress to exile himself from Mexico. Whether in this proposition, as has been charged, the Emperor was actuated by fear, or by the foregoing suggestions, and a desire to avoid the animosities and strife his elevation had given rise to, must be decided by a careful reference to the facts. His own statement is worthy of regard, and will be read with interest. It is as follows.

"I surrendered my power (says the statement,) because I was already free from the obligations which irresistibly compelled me to accept it. The country did not want my services against foreign enemies, because at that time it had none. As

to her domestic foes, far from being useful in resisting them, my presence might have proved rather prejudicial to her than otherwise, because it might have been used as a pretext for saying that war was made against my ambition, and it might have furnished the parties a motive for prolonging the concealment of their political hypocrisy. I did not abdicate from a sense of fear; I know all my enemies, and what they are able to do. With no more than eight hundred men, I undertook to overthrow the Spanish government in the northern part of the continent, at a moment when it possessed all the resources of a long established government, the whole revenue of the country, eleven European expeditionary regiments, seven veteran regiments, and seventeen provincial regiments of natives, which were considered equal to troops of the line, and seventy or eighty thousand royalists, who had firmly opposed the process of Hidalgo's plot. Had I been actuated by fear, would I have exposed myself to the danger of assassination, as I did, by divesting myself of every means of defence?

"Nor was I influenced in my resignation by an apprehension that I had lost any thing in the good opinion of the people, or in the affections of the soldiers. I well knew that at my call the majority of them would join the brave men who were already with me, and the few who might waver, would either imitate their example, after the first action, or be defeated. I had the greater reason to depend on the principal towns, because they had themselves consulted me with respect to the line of conduct which they ought to pursue under the circumstances of the moment, and had declared that they would do no more than obey my orders, which were, that they should remain quiet, as tranquillity was the most conducive to their interests as well as to my reputation. The memorials from the towns will be found in the ministry of state, and the captaincy-general of Mexico, together with my answers, which were all in favour of peace and against bloodshed.

"My love for my country led me first to Iguala; it induced me to ascend the throne, and descend again from so dangerous an elevation; and I have not yet repented either of resigning the sceptre, or having proceeded as I have done. I have left the land of my birth after having obtained for it the greatest of blessings, to remove to a distant country, where I and a large family, delicately brought up, must exist as strangers, and without any other resources than those which I have already mentioned, together with a pension, upon which no man would place much dependence, who knows what revolutions are, and is acquainted with the state in which I left Mexico."

The new congress complied with the requests of the Emperor, permitted him to abdicate the throne, and leave the country; and passed an act annulling the coronation, the acts of his government, and several decrees of the former congress. It also settled upon him during life a pension of 85,000 dollars per annum, provided that he should take up and continue his residence in some part of Italy, and upon his family, after his death, unconditionally, the sum of 18,000 annually.

Demonstrations of affection and respect for the person and position of Iturbide were manifested to so great a degree at the capital, as to render it necessary to occupy the streets with soldiers, and post artillery at the principal places; and the route of his escort to the coast was often intercepted by the people in their eagerness to pay the last tokens of regard to the man that they yet loved before all others. At Tacubaya, when the Marquis de Vivanca addressed the troops on the subject of his departure, they shouted as vociferously as ever, "Live Augustin the First!"

Iturbide remained in Italy but five months, having determined to go to England; where, learning that an attempt had been made to establish a republican government in Mexico, and that his country was again the theatre of domestic war, he was persuaded to return and offer his services to restore, if possible, happiness and tranquillity to the nation. In pursuance of this resolution, he sent several communications to the government offering his services, and embarked on board a vessel with his family and a friend, Colonel Charles de Beneski, and arrived off the bar of *Soto la Marina* on the 12th of July, 1824. Here he was met by General Garza, the Governor of Tamaulipas, who, pretending friendship for Iturbide, offered his assistance in forwarding his views, but at the same time advised him to surrender himself a prisoner to the congress of Tamaulipas, and abide its disposition, assuring him that his representations to that assembly would meet with favour.

In the absence of Iturbide the national congress had decreed, that "in case he should attempt to land in the country in any capacity whatever, he should be declared an outlaw," and the authorities should proceed to punish him as such. He was not aware of the existence of this denunciation when he landed, and unconsciously yielded to the treacherous advice of Garza; and the congress of Tamaulipas, with the utmost precipitation, and without giving him a trial, or even a hearing, passed sentence of death upon him, in pursuance of its vindictive construction of the national decree.

The interval before the expiration of his sentence was spent in performing the last duties of a Christian; and when he was



brought out to be executed, he asked and obtained permission to address the soldiers, which he did in the following language:—"Mexicans! in this last moment of my life I recommend to you the love of your country, and the due observance of our holy religion; it is religion which will lead you to glory. I die for having flown to your assistance, and die happy in expiring among you. I leave this world with honour, and not as a *traitor*—this foul stigma shall not attach itself to the fair fame of my descendants. No, it shall never be said that I was a traitor! Preserve strict subordination, and be obedient to your commanders. By acting in conformity to their mandates, you will obey those of your Creator. I do not address you from any motives of vanity, for I am far from harbouring them. From the bottom of my heart I forgive all my enemies—really from the bottom of my heart." These were the last words of the "Hero of Iguala," and the "Liberator of Mexico." "With his own hands, (says a by-stander,) he adjusted the bandage upon his eyes, knelt down, and receiving two balls in his forehead, and one in his heart, fell dead."

Thus was ended the career of Don Augustin de Iturbide, the greatest statesman, the best man, the purest patriot, and the greatest benefactor of his country, of any of his cotemporaries in Mexico. He fell by the treachery of his pretended friend, Garza, and the unjust and ungrateful decision of the congress of Tamaulipas.

The highly interesting family of this distinguished man, consisting of Mrs. de Iturbide, five sons, and three daughters, now reside in the city of Philadelphia, and are objects of the highest regard to a great portion of the Mexican nation—a nation that now mourns the loss of its greatest benefactor and patriot, and too late discovers and laments the errors and crimes of the factions which were instrumental in overthrowing his government.

FINIS.

