

accurate views of public affairs, or at least to save him from extravagant errors respecting them; who has sufficient firmness of character to vote according to what he thinks best, and not to deviate from his opinion when once convinced of its truth; and whose experience enables him to perceive the grievances which afflict his province, as well as the remedy which they require. For, although that remedy might not always be within his reach, such experience would enable him, on hearing others proposed, to form a sound judgment upon them.

These defects were quite sufficient to extinguish every hope, that any benefits would be derived from the convocatoria of the junta. It had many other faults which I have not mentioned, as I do not mean to comment upon them. But there is one which I cannot pass over in silence, that of having the deputies nominated at the will, not of a district (*partido*), for that would be of a majority of the citizens, but of the Ayuntamientos of the principal towns. See the injury thus done to the country people at large! In the elections a vote was given by the junta, to the electors, chosen by the country people; and a voice was also given to the individuals who composed the Ayuntamiento of the principal town of each department. But in electing the Ayuntamientos, it was possible to get into them by a little management, as was in fact frequently done; because the wish of aspiring to the functions of these bodies, was not so general as the ambition of obtaining a seat in congress. The Ayuntamientos were, therefore, filled up at their own pleasure, and were consequently vitiated; and as all the members possessed a vote in the elections for deputies, the Ayuntamientos became almost the only electors. This is evident to any one who knows how thinly the population is distributed over that country,

and how great a disproportion exists between the number of inhabitants in a town, and in its dependencies.

To render this clearer, let it be supposed that a principal town of a province contains four, eight, or ten thousand inhabitants, leaving out of the question the city of Mexico, the population of which exceeds one hundred and seventy thousand souls, and other cities densely inhabited. The Ayuntamiento of such a town consists, perhaps, of fifty or sixty members; the departments which have to send electors to the principal town, name no more than eight or ten. This small number, therefore, acting in conjunction with all the members of the Ayuntamiento, is reduced to a cipher, and the election terminates according to the pleasure of that body. Thus the people were deceived by being told, that in *them* resided the sovereignty, which they were to delegate to the deputies whom they were about to name; when in fact there was no such nomination, except on the part of the Ayuntamiento, or rather, indeed, of the directors of the junta, who, after the dissolution of that body, passed into the congress, in order to continue their manœuvres.

To this system, so framed, was added intrigue in the elections; the most worthy men were not sought for, nor even those who were decided for any particular party. It was quite sufficient if the candidate were my enemy, or so ignorant that he might easily be persuaded to become so. If he possessed either of these requisites, he was deemed competent to discharge the sacred functions which were to be intrusted to him.

If the archives of state have not been spoliated, remonstrances may be found amongst them from almost all the provinces, pointing out the nullity of the powers conferred on the deputies. Several individuals were



elected who had been accused of conduct notoriously scandalous; some had been prosecuted as criminals: others were men of broken fortunes, tumultuous demagogues, officers who had capitulated, and who, violating the laws of war and their paroles, had again taken up arms against the cause of liberty, and after suffering defeat had surrendered a second time. Some of the new deputies were obstinate anti-independents, and one was an apostate monk, although by law no member of the religious orders could have a seat in congress. The authors of the remonstrances offered also to prove, that the rules for the conduct of the elections, as they were laid down in the convocatoria, had been infringed; and that the persons returned were not those whom the majority approved, but those who were the most skilful in intrigue. These documents were all sent to my department, when I was generalissimo and admiral-in-chief; when I became emperor, I directed them to be transmitted to the department of the interior, for the purpose of being deposited in the archives. I did not wish to lay them before the congress, because even if justice were done, which could hardly be expected, I saw that they would be productive only of odium, and of legal prosecutions. I considered that time would be lost in new elections, as it would be necessary to have the most of them renewed, and I felt that our most important care was first to organize the government. Besides, I thought that the errors into which this congress might fall, might be corrected by that which should succeed it. This mode of reasoning, which would have been questionable perhaps under any other circumstances, was suitable to those which then existed, because the object was to avoid greater evils.

The result of the elections, therefore, was the forma-

tion of a congress, perfectly comfortable to the wishes of the party who influenced its nomination. A few men of undoubted virtue and wisdom, and of the purest patriotism, whose fair reputation was so widely extended that no machinations could prevent them from having a majority of suffrages, found themselves confounded with a multitude of intriguers, of assuming manners and sinister intentions. I do not desire to be credited on my mere assertions; examine the acts of the congress during the eight months that elapsed from its installation until its suspension. The principal object of its assembling was to draw up a constitution for the empire: not a single line of it was written. In a country, naturally the richest in the world, the treasury was exhausted; there were no funds to pay the army or the public functionaries; there was no revenue, not even a system of finance established, as that which had existed in the time of the Spanish rule had been abolished, without any other system having been substituted for it. The congress would not occupy itself in matters of such essential importance, notwithstanding the repeated and urgent solicitations which I made to it in person, and through the secretaries of state. The administration of justice was wholly neglected; in the changes which had taken place some of the officers had left the empire, some died, others had embraced new avocations, and the offices and tribunals were nearly deserted. Upon this subject also the congress declined to take any steps: in short, although the empire was in the weakness of infancy, and wanted their assistance at every point, they did nothing. The speeches which were pronounced, turned on matters of the most trifling description, and if any of them happened to touch on topics deserving of consideration, they were, to say the



least of them, foreign to the exigencies of the moment. What honors should be paid to the chiefs of the insurrection who had fallen? What should be the form for the oath of an archbishop? Who ought to nominate the supreme tribunal of justice? Such, together with a demand for an apostate friar who was a prisoner in the castle of San Juan de Ulua, and other similar subjects, formed the grave occupations of a body so august in its institution! Add to this, that not a single regulation was made for the government of the interior. The result was, that the congress became the opprobrium of the people, and fell into a state of abject contempt. The public prints exposed its defects, and even one of the deputies stated his opinion that it stood in need of reformation.

It soon became manifest that the object of those who gave all its movements to that machine, was only to gain time, and to deceive each other until they found an opportunity, for the arrival of which they secretly labored, in order to throw off the mask. Notwithstanding the cunning which they used, and the dissimulation with which they endeavored to carry out their designs, the people and the army saw through their real views. Neither the army nor the people desired slavery on one hand, or republicanism on the other; nor did they wish to see me deposed, or even in any manner offended, and from these feelings arose that distrust with which the whole nation received all the resolutions that originated in so vitiated a body.

About the month of April, 1822, a state of agitation was observable, which threatened to end in anarchy. A public measure, effected in a scandalous manner, discovered the hypocrisy of its authors. The congress deposed three of the regents, leaving in office with me

only one, who was well known to be my enemy, for the purpose of reducing my vote in the executive to a nullity. They did not attempt to depose me, from an apprehension that they would be resisted by the army and the people, of my influence with whom they were well aware. This resolution was passed in the most precipitate and singular manner. The question was proposed, discussed, agreed to, and carried into execution in one sitting, whereas it had been previously settled by decree that every proposition which was submitted to the congress, should be read three times, at three distinct sittings, before it should be discussed. After this step they proposed another; a commission, appointed for that purpose, presented a regulation concerning the regency, in which the command of the army was declared incompatible with the functions of the executive power. They were jealous of my having the soldiery at my disposal: to such men fear was very natural. This regulation, although it did not receive the sanction of the legislature on account of the want of time, left no doubt of the designs which were entertained against me, and was the immediate cause which accelerated the event of the 18th of May. At ten o'clock on that memorable night the people and garrison of Mexico proclaimed me emperor. "Live Agustin the First!" was the universal cry. Instantly, as if all were actuated by the same sentiment, that extensive capital was illuminated; the balconies were decorated, and filled with the most respectable inhabitants, who joyously echoed back the acclamations of the immense crowds of people which thronged all the streets, especially those near the house where I resided. Not one citizen expressed any disapprobation, a decided proof of the weakness of my enemies, and of the universality of the public opinion in my



favor. No accident or disorder of any kind occurred. The first impulse of my mind was to go forth and declare my determination not to yield to the wishes of the people. If I restrained myself from appearing before them for that purpose, it was solely in compliance with the counsel of a friend who happened at the moment to be with me. "They will consider it an insult," he had scarcely time to say to me, "and the people know no restraint when they are irritated. You must make this fresh sacrifice to the public good; the country is in danger; remain a moment longer undecided, and you will hear their acclamations turned into death-shouts." I felt it necessary to resign myself to circumstances; and I spent the whole of that night in allaying the general enthusiasm, and persuading the troops to give time for my decision, and in the meanwhile to render obedience to the congress. I went out repeatedly to harangue them, and wrote a short proclamation, which was circulated the following morning, and in which I expressed the same sentiments as those I addressed to the people. I convened the regency, assembled the generals and superior officers, communicated what had occurred by despatch to the president of the congress, and requested him to summon immediately an extraordinary sitting. The regency was of opinion that I ought to yield to public opinion; the superior officers of the army added that such also was their unanimous opinion, that it was expedient I should do so, and that I was not at liberty to act according to my own desires, as I had dedicated myself entirely to my country; that their privations and sufferings would be useless if I persisted in my objections; and that having compromised themselves through me, and having yielded me unqualified obedience, they had a claim to

my compliance. They subsequently drew up a memorial which they presented to the congress, requesting it to take this important matter into its consideration. This paper was signed also by the individual who subsequently officiated as president of the act of Casa-Mata, and by one of the present members of the executive body.

The congress met on the following morning; the people crowded to the galleries and the entrance to the chamber: their applauses were incessant; a joyous agitation was observable in every face; the speeches of the deputies were interrupted by the impatience of the multitude. It is difficult to obtain order in moments like these; but such an important discussion required it, and in order to attain that object, the congress required that I should be present at the sitting. A deputation was appointed, who communicated the invitation to me. I declined it, because as they were about to treat of me personally, my presence might be considered as a restraint on the freedom of debate, and an impediment to the clear and frank expression of each individual's opinion. The deputation and several general officers, however, prevailed on me to accept the invitation, and I immediately went out in order to proceed to the place where the congress was assembled. The streets were scarcely passable, so crowded were they with the inhabitants of the capital; they took the horses from my carriage, and I was drawn by the people, and amidst their enthusiastic acclamations, to the palace of the congress. On entering the hall where the deputies were assembled, the *vivas* were still more enthusiastic, and resounded from every quarter.

The question of the nomination was discussed, and there was not a single deputy who opposed my acces-



sion to the throne. The only hesitation expressed by a few, arose from a consideration that their powers were not extensive enough to authorize them to decide on the question. It appeared to them that it would be necessary to notify the subject to provinces, and to require from them an enlargement of powers already granted, or new powers specifically applicable to this case alone. I supported this opinion, as it afforded me an opportunity of finding out some means for evading the acceptance of a situation which I was most anxious to decline. But the majority were of a contrary opinion, and I was elected by seventy-seven voices against fifteen. These latter did not deny me their suffrages; they confined themselves simply to the expression of their belief, that the provinces ought to be consulted, since they did not think their powers ample enough, but at the same time they said that they were persuaded that their constituents would agreed with the majority, and think that what was done was in every respect conducive to the public welfare. Mexico never witnessed a day of more unmixed satisfaction; every order of the inhabitants testified it. I returned home as I had proceeded to the congress, my carriage drawn by the people, who crowded around to congratulate me, expressing the pleasure which they felt on seeing their wishes fulfilled.

The intelligence of these events was transmitted to the provinces by express, and the answers which successively came from each of them, not only expressed approbation of what had been done, without the dissent of a single town, but added that it was precisely what they desired, and that they would have expressed their wishes long before, if they had not considered themselves precluded from doing so by the plan

of Iguala and the treaty of Cordova, to which they had sworn. I received also the congratulations of an individual who commanded a regiment, and exercised great influence over a considerable part of the country. He told me that his satisfaction was so much the greater, as he was anxious to avoid making himself remarkable; but, at the same time, that he had made arrangements for proclaiming me, in case it had not been done in Mexico.

The authors of the libels which have been written against me, have not passed over the occurrences of the 18th and 19th of May, amidst which they represent me as acting the part of an ambitious tyrant, attributing the proceedings which took place to secret management on my part, and the intrigues of my friends. I feel assured that they never can prove the truth of these assertions, and that they will receive no credit from those who know, that on my entry into Mexico, on the 27th of September, as well as on my swearing to our independence, on the 27th of October, it was likewise generally wished that I should be proclaimed emperor. If I was not so proclaimed at that time, it was because I did not wish it, and it was with no small difficulty that I prevailed on those who were then raising the shout, to desist from their purpose.

If, as has been imputed to me, I at that time conceived any intention of assuming the crown, I should not have declared the very reverse in the plan of Iguala, adding this difficulty to those with which the enterprise was already attended. Nay, if that plan had been framed for the purpose of deluding the country, as some persons have been pleased to assert, what reason was there for repeating the same clause in the treaty of Cordova, when I was under no necessity of dissembling?



If even up to that period I wished for some particular cause to conceal my design, what occasion could I have found more favorable to its accomplishment than the 27th of September and the 27th of October, in that year? The whole empire was then actually ruled by my voice; there were no troops except those which were under my command; I was generalissimo of the army; the soldiers were all attached to me, and the people called me their liberator; no enemy threatened me on any side, and there were no longer any Spanish troops in the country. The cabinet of Madrid had not an individual throughout all New Spain, to whom it could address its decrees; the exertions of that court did not alarm me, as I was not ignorant of the extent to which they could reach. If I did not grasp the sceptre at a time when I not only could have been emperor, but had to vanquish a thousand difficulties in order to prevent being so, how can it be said that I obtained it afterwards only by intrigue and cabal?

It has been asserted also, that there was not sufficient freedom in the congress for my election, inasmuch as I was present while it was carried on. It has been already seen that I attended because the congress itself invited me. That the galleries did not allow the deputies to deliver their sentiments is untrue; each member, who chose to rise, expressed his opinion without more than some few interruptions, which always happens where matter of such importance is under deliberation, without the decrees so discussed, being therefore considered less binding than those which are passed at a secret sitting. It has been further alleged that some superior officers accompanied me on that occasion. The office which I then held, and the object for which I had been invited to attend, required that I should have around me those

to whom I could communicate my orders in case of necessity. However vehemently they may assert that my retinue imposed restraint on the congress, the very persons who state this are convinced that it is not true. Four aides-de-camp and the commanding officer of my escort accompanied my suite; besides these I saw six or eight captains and subalterns, who were first mingled with the crowd that thronged the entrance of the hall; these did not go in with me, and were, therefore, no more than so many spectators, wishing to gratify their curiosity; but neither the latter nor the former, neither the soldiers nor the people, said or did anything which could be construed to menace, or in any manner restrain the congress, even if it had been composed of the most timid characters, and had been electing the weakest of mankind. It is equally false that the hall had been filled with the people, and that the deputies were confounded amongst them. Unfortunately this has been affirmed by the congress itself; thus proving that it was composed of men as changeable as they were weak, who were not ashamed to declare in the face of the world, that they voted under the influence of fear against their conscientious opinions, on a question of the gravest importance which could be presented for their deliberation. What confidence can the provinces repose in them? What duties can be confided to their care with the hope of an auspicious result? What laws can be dictated by a legislature devoid of probity? And what opinion can be formed of a body which has no firmness, and blushes not to proclaim its servility? I should have considered as a libeller, any man who said that the congress had not acted from its own free will; but as it has itself declared the same thing, and as I am not in a situation to give judgment on the matter, those who have heard



both sides will decide according to what appears to them, and posterity, I doubt not, will form an opinion of that assembly little honorable to its reputation.

It has been further alleged that the number of deputies present was not sufficient to give validity to the election. Ninety-four attended, one hundred and sixty-two was the total number for that portion of the empire which was previously called the viceroyalty of Mexico; from the kingdom of Guatemala which was subsequently added to it, deputies could not be received, because in some of the districts the elections were carried on conformably to the Spanish constitution, and in others according to a particular convocatoria which they framed. An exception must also be made as to the deputies who were to have come for the provinces of San Salvador, who are included in the calculation of my adversaries, but who ought not to be enumerated, because that country had declared a government independent of Mexico. However, taking even the twenty-four deputies for Guatemala into account, the total number would be one hundred and eighty-two, the half of which is ninety-one. The sitting was attended by ninety-four deputies, although only ninety-two voted; whence it follows that allowing all the restrictions which are demanded, there were still the half and one more present, according to the rule of the Spanish constitution, which, it was agreed, should be observed upon this point; although many decrees had the force of law, at the passing of which no more than seventy or eighty deputies had been present. And what will the supporters of the nullification say to the fact, that on the 22d of June, 1822, without any desire on the part of the government, without any extraordinary assemblage of the people which might overawe the deputies, without being

pressed for time in their deliberations, without my presence serving as an obstacle, without any agitation in the capital, and the whole garrison being in profound tranquillity, the congress of its own accord resolved, with the entire unanimity of one hundred and nine deputies who were present, that the crown should be hereditary in my family in lineal succession, giving the title of Prince of the Empire to my eldest son, whom they designated as the heir apparent, of Mexican Princes to the rest of my sons, Prince of the Union to my father, and Princess de Iturbide to my sister? They also prescribed the regulations for my inauguration, and all this they did without its having been preceded, or attended, by any of those causes which compelled them, as they alleged, to join in the first acclamation. I mention this, not for the purpose of establishing rights, which I have renounced with the most perfect good will, but to answer the cavils which have been thrown out against me, and to show the bad faith with which I have been treated.

In order to avoid murmurs, I did not, after my election, bestow those favors which are usually lavished on such occasions. It is not true that I distributed money, or that I gave away any appointments, except that of a captain to a sergeant, not for his having contributed to my elevation, but because he bore the best character in his regiment, and I wished to give the soldiers a proof of my attachment for them, by promoting an individual whom they considered worthy of a superior rank.

I have already frequently said, and I cannot too often repeat it, that I accepted the crown only with the view to serve my country, and to save it from anarchy. I was well persuaded that my personal situation was anything but improved; that I should be persecuted by envy; that



the measures which I could not avoid adopting, would dissatisfy many; that it was impossible to please all; that I was about to clash with a body which was full of ambition and pride, and which, at the very moment it was declaiming against despotism, labored to concentrate within its own circle all the power of the state, leaving the monarch reduced to a mere phantom, and assuming to itself not only the enactment, but the administration and execution of the laws; a tyranny which is always more intolerable when in the hands of a numerous body, than when deposited in those of a single individual. The Mexicans would have been less free than the inhabitants of Algiers, if the congress had carried all its designs into effect. At one time or other they will be undeceived; may it not be so late as that the difficulties which surround them shall be found insuperable! I was well aware that I was about to become the slave of business; that the duties which I undertook would not be looked upon with a favorable eye by all parties; and that by a fate which some would consider fortunate, but which I would have always avoided if it were possible, I was about to abandon everything which I had inherited and acquired, and with which my children would have been enabled to live independently, wherever they chose.

Upon my accession to the throne, it appeared as if all dissensions had subsided into repose. But the fire, though latent, continued to burn; the different parties, though they dissembled for a short time, still carried on their machinations; and the conduct of the congress became the scandal of the people. I repeatedly received information of clandestine meetings, which were held by several deputies, for the purpose of devising the subversion of the government—a government, be it

remembered, that was sworn to by the whole nation, which solemn act was performed in different provinces solely upon the intelligence being transmitted through private letters, without waiting for official advices. The conspirators were fully aware that they were proceeding in direct contradiction to the general will; and, in order to have a pretext for their treasons, they found it necessary to propagate a report that I was desirous of becoming an absolute monarch. Not a single reason did they ever allege in proof of such an accusation. Indeed, how could they bring any proof against one who twice refused to accept the crown that was offered him; who, at a time when he knew no rival in the opinion of the people or army, not only did not seek to preserve the unlimited power which he had obtained, but dismembered and parted with it? When I entered Mexico, my will was law; I commanded the public forces; the tribunals possessed no attributes, save those which emanated from my authority. Could I be more absolute? And who compelled me to divide my power? I, and I alone; because I considered it just. *Then*, at least, I did not wish to be absolute; could I have desired it afterwards? How can they reconcile my adoption of such opposite extremes?

The true cause of the conduct pursued by the congress is that this machine was set in motion by the impulse received from its directors; and these persons saw with secret aversion, that I achieved the independence of the country, without the assistance of any one of them; whereas they desired that everything should be ascribed to themselves. Although they had not the resolution to act in the season of peril, they sought to render themselves conspicuous by deluding the multitude with schoolboy disputations, and by setting them-



selves up as sages to whom the ignorant were to look up with reverential respect!

In the meantime, so many denunciations, complaints, and remonstrances, reached my hands, that I could not avoid attending to them, both because the public tranquillity and safety were exposed to danger, and because documents of the same description were sent to me by the different departments of government; and if any misfortune occurred (and misfortunes of the most formidable kind were on the eve of happening), I should have been responsible to the nation and the world.

I resolved, therefore, on proceeding against those who were implicated, as I was authorized to do by the attributes which I possessed; if any person dispute their extent, he may see them defined in the 170th article of the Spanish constitution, which so far was in force. On the 26th of August, I ordered the apprehension of the deputies who were comprised in the denunciations, and charged with being conspirators. In order to see if that charge were founded on circumstances sufficient, in point of law, to sustain it, and whether I had reason to urge me to take a step which has been called violent and despotic, reference must be made to the report of the fiscal of the *sumaria*, which was approved in all its parts by the council of state.

The congress demanded, in an imperious manner, that the deputies should be given up to them, and required to be informed of the causes of their detention, in order that they might be tried by the tribunal of cortes. I resisted giving them up until the *sumaria* was concluded, and until it was decided by what tribunal they were to be tried. I could not agree that they should be sent before the tribunal just mentioned, which was composed of individuals of the congress, who were

suspected of being connected with the conspiracy. They were, besides, partial members of an assembly, the majority of which was in bad repute; and which, amongst other proofs of its bad faith, had treated with indifference the disclosures which I had made to it on the 3d of April, respecting the secret manœuvres of some of their own body.

The interval, until the 30th of October, was spent in mutual contention. At that period the discontent of the people increased, and they threatened to put an immediate end to their sufferings which had been so much abused; the public writers repeated their invectives against the congress with more vehemence than ever, and the provinces refused to contribute to the stipends of delegates, who did not discharge the duties intrusted to them. The national representation had already brought itself into contempt, by its apathy in all that related to the public welfare, by its activity in creating evils, by its insufferable insolence, and by its permitting some of its members to maintain in public sittings, that no respect was due to the plan of Iguala, or the treaty of Cordova, although they had sworn to observe both upon their admission into the sanctuary of the laws, and although those documents formed the basis given them by their constituents for the guidance of their conduct.

They endeavored at that time merely to depreciate the plan of Iguala, because they could do no more, while I supported it as the expression of the will of the people. But since my abdication, they have not been content with speaking against it; relying on a mere sophism they have annulled one of its fundamental principles, and under the pretence of doing away with the invitation given to the Bourbons, they have abolished the limited monarchy altogether. What connexion was



there between one and the other? On the 8th of April, 1823, the congress passed a decree, in which they declared that the plan of Iguala, and the treaties of Cordova, ceased to have force, as to those parts which referred to the form of government, and the calling in of the Bourbons, and that the nation was fully at liberty to constitute itself. In fact, those documents had already ceased to have force as to that portion which the congress annulled, relating to the invitation given to the Bourbons; but they lost their effect thus far, not because such was the will of the people, when conferring their powers on the deputies, but because the government of Madrid did not choose to ratify the treaty signed by O Donoju, nor to accept the invitation which the Mexicans freely offered to that family. It was not competent to the congress to say that at no time did there exist any right to bind the Mexican nation by any law or treaty, except through the nation itself, or its representatives. For although the proposition, taken by itself, is true, it is false if it be taken with reference to the plan of Iguala and the treaty of Cordova; first, because both were the expression of the general will of the Mexicans, as I have already said, and secondly, because the powers which were conferred on the deputies as well as their oath, were founded on the principles, and supported on the bases, of both these documents. They were instructed by their constituents to organize the government of the empire, as to its fundamental bases, conformably to the plan of Iguala, and the treaty of Cordova. If, therefore, these bases were not conformable to what the public right of every free nation requires, whence did the deputies derive their authority to create a congress, and whence could such a body have received its attributes of legis-

lation? Numerous are the decrees of that assembly, which evince a similar absence of discernment. They might have very properly said that the invitation given to the Bourbons was null, because those princes declined to accept it. But to assert that, therefore, the plan of Iguala and the treaty of Cordova were null, in every part, is the extreme of absurdity. And it is the extreme of ignorance or of malice to add, that the legislative body could not be bound to adhere to the basis of that form of government, which was considered most expedient by those who gave to the congress its existence as a congress. If that assembly had known its duty, and had proceeded with honor and good faith, it would have respected the plan of Iguala as the source of its own authority, and the foundation of the edifice of the state. But it took an opposite course.

For such an abuse of their authority as this, no palliation was sufficient, and no remedy could be found. Such a congress neither could nor ought to continue. This was not only my opinion, but that of every one whom I consulted on the subject, particularly of a meeting which I held publicly in my palace, and to which I summoned such persons as were most distinguished by the respectability of their character, the ministers, the council of state, the generals and other superior officers, and seventy-two deputies.

On the 30th of October, I transmitted a despatch to the president of the congress through a superior officer, informing him that that body had ceased to exist, and without any other formality, without violence or further occurrence of any sort, the congress was closed at noon on that day. No person sympathized with them in their fall; on the contrary, I received congratulations from all quarters, and in consequence of this proceed-



ing I was again called the "Liberator of Anahuac," and "the father of the people."

In order that a body so respectable by its institution should not be entirely wanting to its duty, and lest it should be supposed that I arrogated to myself the power of making the laws, I formed the same day, an assembly which I called the "Instituent Junta," consisting of members of the congress, and selected from all the provinces. They amounted to forty-five in number, exclusive of eight supplemental deputies.

All of these had been elected by their respective provinces, and for all the provinces there were representatives. Their duty was confined to the formation of a new convocatoria, and they exercised the functions of the legislative power only in cases of urgent necessity. They understood that with respect to the convocatoria, they were to avoid those defects which the first junta of government had interwoven in it, and particularly to attend to the rights of the people to whom they were to leave the full measure of their liberty, and whom they were, at the same time, to protect as much as possible from the intrigues and cabals of those who would not hesitate to abuse their simplicity.

Happily so far my measures were attended with general approbation, and I also received congratulations on the installation of the "Instituent Junta."

At this period the empire was tranquil, the government was actively engaged in consolidating the public prosperity, and our interior grievances were removed. It only remained for us to get possession of the castle of San Juan de Ulua, the sole point which was in the possession of the Spaniards, and which commanded Vera Cruz; its garrisons were relieved by troops from the Havana, and on account of its proximity to the

island of Cuba, it offered every possible advantage to an internal enemy.

The Brigadier Santa Anna commanded the fortress of Vera Cruz, and was commandant-general of the province, under Echavarri, who was its captain-general. Both of these had instructions relative to the capture of the castle; some jealousies arose between them concerning their respective authority, which they carried to such an extreme, that the former attempted to have the latter assassinated during a sortie made by the Spaniards; for which purpose he had so well concerted his measures, that Echavarri, according to his own account, owed his life to the bravery of a dozen soldiers, and to a panic which seized those who attacked him. In consequence of this circumstance, added to the repeated complaints against Santa Anna, which I received from the former captain-general, from the provincial deputation, from the consulate, from a number of the inhabitants, from the lieutenant-colonel of the corps which he commanded, and from several officers, who expressed themselves strongly against his arbitrary and insolent conduct as a governor, I was under the necessity of divesting him of his command. I had conferred it upon him, because I thought he possessed valor; a virtue which I esteem in a soldier, and I hoped that the rank in which I had placed him, would correct his defects, with which I was not unacquainted. I also hoped that experience, and an anxiety not to displease me, would have brought him to reason. I confirmed to him the rank of lieutenant-colonel which the last viceroy had given him by mistake, I bestowed on him the cross of the order of Guadalupe, I gave him the command of one of the best regiments in the army, the government of a fortress of the greatest importance at that period, the appointment



of brigadier (*con letras*), and made him the second chief of the province. I had always distinguished him, nor did I on this occasion wish that he should be disgraced. I intimated to the minister that the order of recall should be framed in complimentary terms, and accompanied by another summoning him to court, where his services were required for the execution of a mission which he might consider as a promotion.

All this, however, was not sufficient to restrain his volcanic passions; he felt bitterly offended, and determined to revenge himself on the individual who had heaped benefits upon him. He flew to excite an explosion at Vera Cruz, where the intelligence of his having lost his command had not yet arrived, and where a great part of the inhabitants are Spaniards, who exercise great influence on account of their wealth, and are averse to the independence of the country, because it put an end to that exclusive commerce which was the inexhaustible source of their riches, to the prejudice of other nations, including that of Mexico itself, from which they demanded and obtained such prices as they pleased. There it was that Santa Anna proclaimed a republic. He flattered the officers with promotions, he deluded the garrison with promises, he took the respectable portion of the inhabitants by surprise, and intimidated the neighboring towns of Alvarado and Antigua, as well as the people of color in the adjacent hamlets. He attempted also to surprise the town of Jalapa, and was defeated with the loss of all his infantry and artillery, and the total rout of his cavalry, who saved themselves only by the fleetness of their horses. Whilst Santa Anna was attacking Jalapa, the towns of Alvarado and Antigua placed themselves again under the protection of the government.

This was the proper moment for putting an end to the rebellion, and punishing the traitor. General Echavarrí and Brigadier Cortazar, who commanded strong divisions, and had been directed to pursue him, might have taken the fortress of Vera Cruz without any resistance; and by placing themselves between it and Santa Anna, might have captured the whole of the remains of the cavalry that could have rallied; but nothing was done.

The affair of Jalapa undeceived those who had afforded any credit to the delusive promises of Santa Anna; he was now shut up within the fortress of Vera Cruz and the imperial bridge, a position truly military; which was defended by two hundred mulattoes, under the command of Don Guadalupe Victoria. Being thus confined to the fortress, he shipped his baggage and made arrangements for his own escape by sea, as well as for that of such of his companions as were committed in his cause, who were all prepared to fly the moment they should be attacked.

Although the apathy of Echavarrí should have been perhaps, a sufficient cause for exciting distrust as to his fidelity, it was not so with me, because I had formed the highest opinion of him. Echavarrí had experienced from me the greatest proofs of friendship; I treated him like a brother; I had raised him from insignificance in the political career to the high rank which he enjoyed; I was as unreserved with him as if he were my son; and it pains me, now to be compelled to speak of him, because his actions do him no honor.

I gave orders for the siege of the fortress, I authorized the general to act according to his own discretion, on such occasions as he deemed necessary, without waiting for instructions from the government. Troops,