

artillery, provisions, ammunition, and money, were supplied him in abundance, the garrison was dismayed; the officers were determined to fly; the walls, low and feeble, offered every facility for an assault, if he did not wish to open a breach, which might have been effected in any direction in the course of an hour. Notwithstanding all these advantages, only a few skirmishes took place, and the siege lasted till the 2d of February, when the convention of Casa Mata was agreed to; in consequence of which, the besiegers and the besieged united together for the re-establishment of the congress, the only object which, as they then said, they had in view.

The fault which I think I committed in my government was, that I did not assume the command of the army the moment I had reason to suspect the defection of Echavarri. I deceived myself by reposing too much confidence in others. I now feel that to a statesman such a disposition is always injurious, because it is impossible to fathom the depth to which the perversity of the human heart descends.

It has been already seen, that it was not love for his country which actuated Santa Anna in raising his voice for a republic; let the world judge also, if it was the feeling of a patriot which guided the conduct of Echavarri, knowing, as he did, that at that period commissioners had arrived at San Juan de Ulua from the Spanish government, for the purpose of *pacifying* that part of America, which it considered to be in a state of rebellion. Echavarri entered into a correspondence with them, and with the governor of the castle; he suddenly forgot his natural resentment against Santa Anna, and joined with him in opinion; he forgot the friendship which I had shown him; he forgot the duty which he owed to

the Mexicans; he forgot even his honor, in order to accept the system of a man who was not only his public, but his personal, enemy; and by entering into a capitulation with him, though at the time in command of superior numbers, he crowned his disgrace, and brought a stain upon his character, which no lapse of time can remove. Can it be, that Echavarri, remembering his native land, wished to render his countrymen such a service, as might expiate his former conduct? I shall pass no judgment upon him. Let those do it who cannot be charged with partiality.

After the convention of Casa Mata, the besiegers and the besieged united, and rushed like a torrent over the provinces of Vera Cruz and Puebla, without paying any regard to the government, or the least respect to me, although it was expressly stipulated that a copy of the convention should be sent to me by a commission. This commission was reduced to one officer, who arrived when the whole army was in motion, and when every point was taken possession of, which the time allowed, without waiting to know if I wholly or partly approved, or rejected that convention. It was also expressly provided in that act, that no attempt should be made against my person or authority.

The Marquis de Vivanco commanded the provinces of Puebla *ad interim*. He was also one of those who had experienced my favor. He never was, nor ever can be, a republican; he abhorred Santa Anna personally, and he was hated by the army as being an anti-independent, and on account of a certain want of frankness in his character. Notwithstanding all this, Vivanco joined the rebels, and Puebla refused to obey the government.

I went out to take a position between Mexico and the

rebels, for the purpose of reducing them without violence, by agreeing to everything which was not incompatible with the public good. I resolved to draw a veil over the past, and to put out of the question everything relating personally to myself. We agreed that a new congress should be convened, the convocatoria for which had been already settled on the 8th of December, by the instituent junta, and was printed and about to be issued. Limits were fixed to the troops on both sides, and it was stipulated that they should remain within their lines, until the national representation should meet and decide the question, all parties agreeing to submit to its determination. Such was the agreement entered into with the commissioners whom I had sent for that purpose; but those on the other side violated the stipulations into which they had entered, by despatching emissaries to the provinces, for the purpose of persuading them to abide by the Act of Casa Mata. Several of the provincial deputations did accede to it; but at the same moment that they did so, they expressed a resolution to respect my person, and to resist any attempt that might be made against me, notwithstanding the arts and menaces which were used in order to change the current of their feelings.

It has been said that I wished to assume absolute power; I have already demonstrated the falsehood of this charge. I have been accused, also, of enriching myself from the public treasury, although at this moment I have no other dependence than the property which has been assigned to me; and if there be any man who knows that I have funds in any foreign bank, I hereby cede them to him, that he may make such use of them as he thinks fit.

The best proof that I have not enriched myself, is

that I am not rich; I have by no means so much as I possessed when I undertook to establish the independence of my country. I not only did not misapply the public funds, but I have not even received from the treasury the sums which were granted to me. The first junta of provisional government made an order, that a million of dollars should be paid to me out of the property of the extinct inquisition, and also assigned to me twenty square leagues of territory in the inland provinces. I have not received from these resources a single real. The congress passed a decree that all my expenses should be supplied by the treasury to whatever extent I should require, and the instituent junta granted me an annual income of a million and a half of dollars. I received no more than was barely necessary for my subsistence, and this was drawn in small sums by my steward, every four or six days, preferring always the exigencies of the state to my own and those of my family. I may mention another circumstance, which shows that self-interest is not my passion. When the instituent junta granted me the annuity of a million and a half of dollars, I appropriated the third part of that sum to the formation of a bank, which might contribute to the encouragement and assistance of the mining trade, a principal branch of industry in that country, but which had gone to ruin in consequence of the late convulsions. Regulations for the institution were drawn up by individuals experienced in the subject, and specially commissioned for the purpose.

As little did I enrich any of my relatives by giving them lucrative employments. I listened to no private influence; those who obtained official situations through me, obtained them as matter of justice in the scale of promotion, or through the consequences of the revolu-

tion, according to the rank in which they stood when the government was changed, without their situation being at all improved by my elevation to the throne.

It has been said that I acted arbitrarily by imprisoning some of the deputies of congress, and afterwards suspending it. To this charge I have already answered. It has been alleged, too, that I paid no respect to property, because I made use of the convoy of specie, amounting to one million two hundred thousand dollars, which left Mexico, bound for the Havana, in October, 1822. At that time the congress had been strongly pressed by the government to supply the means for meeting the exigencies of the state, and it gave me authority to appropriate to that purpose any existing fund. It informed me privately, through some of its members, that in adopting this measure, it had particularly in view the convoy in question; but that it had made no allusion to it in the decree, because the promulgation of that document would warn the proprietors to abstract their respective shares, before the necessary orders could be issued. There were no means for the support of the army; the public functionaries were without pay; all the public funds were exhausted; no loan could be obtained at home; and those resources which might be solicited from abroad, required more time than the urgency of the moment could allow. At that period a treaty was pending for a loan from England, and the negotiations had every appearance of a successful issue; but they could not be concluded within five or six months at the least, and the necessities of the state were too pressing to be postponed.

At the same time, impressed as I always have been with the deep sense of the sacredness of private property, I should never have acceded to the wishes of the con-

gress, if I had not had good reason to believe that specie was remitted in that convoy for the Spanish government under fictitious names, and that almost the whole of it was intended for the Peninsula, where it would indisputably contribute to support the party which was opposed to the Mexicans. I trust that this will sufficiently appear to have been my view of the transaction, from the circumstance that all foreigners who could prove any part of those funds to belong to them, immediately obtained an order from me for its restitution. But even supposing (which, however, I cannot concede), that it was wrong to seize the above-mentioned funds, to whom is the error to be attributed? Is it to be ascribed to me, who had no authority to levy contributions or loans, or to the congress, which, in a period of eight months, had arranged no system of revenue, nor formed any plan of finance? Is it to be imputed to me, who could not avoid executing a peremptory law, or to the congress which dictated it?

The act of Casa Mata fully justified my conduct in August and October, with respect to the congress. The last revolution has only been the result of the plans which were then formed by the conspirators. They have not adopted a single step that varies from the *sumaria*, which was taken at that time. The places where the cry of insurrection was first to be raised, the troops who were most deeply committed in the plot, the persons who were to direct the revolution, the manner in which I and my family were to be disposed of, the decrees to be passed by congress, the kind of government which was to be established, all are to be found enumerated in the declarations and results of the *sumaria*. Neither the imprisonment of the deputies, nor the

reform of the congress, nor the seizure of the convoy, were the true causes of the late revolution.

I repeatedly solicited a private interview with the principal dissenting chiefs, without being able to obtain anything more than one answer in a private note from Echavarri. Their guilt prevented them from facing me; their ingratitude confounded them. They despaired of receiving indulgence from me (which was another proof of their weakness), although they were not ignorant that I was always ready to pardon my enemies, and that I never availed myself of my public authority to avenge personal wrongs.

The events which occurred at Casa Mata united the republican and the Bourbon parties, who never could agree but for the purpose of opposing me. It was as well, therefore, that they should take off the mask as soon as possible, and make themselves known, which could not have happened if I had not given up my power. I reassembled the congress, I abdicated the crown, and I requested permission, through the minister of relations, to exile myself from my native country.

I surrendered my power, 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 with 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 as equal to troops of the line, and seventy or eighty thousand royalists, who had firmly opposed the progress 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 anything in the good opinion of the people, or in the affection 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 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 favor of peace and against bloodshed.

My love for my country led me first to Iguala, it induced me to ascend the throne and to descend again from so dangerous an elevation; and I have not yet repented either of resigning the sceptre or having pro-

ceeded as I have done. I have left the land of my birth after having obtained for it the greatest of blessings, in order 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.

There will not be wanting persons who will charge me with a want of foresight, and with weakness in reinstating a congress, of whose defects I was aware, and the members of which will always continue to be my determined enemies. My reason for so acting was this, that I should leave in existence some acknowledged authority, because the convocation of another congress would have required time, and circumstances did not admit of any delay. Had I taken any other course, anarchy would inevitably have ensued, upon the different parties showing themselves, and the result would have been the dissolution of the state. It was my wish to make this last sacrifice for my country.

To this same congress I preferred a request that it would fix the place where it wished me to reside, and select such troops as it might think proper to form the escort that was to attend me to the place of embarkation. It fixed on a point in the bay of Mexico for my embarkation, and gave me for escort five hundred men, whom I wished to be taken from among those that had seceded from their allegiance to me, and to be commanded by the Brigadier Bravo, whom I also selected from my opponents, in order to convince them that he who now surrendered his arms, and placed himself in the hands of those persons whose treachery he had already expe-

rienced, had not avoided meeting them in the field through any personal fear.

On the day fixed for my departure from Mexico, the people prevented me from leaving it. When the army calling itself (for what reason it knew not) the liberating army, made its entry, there were none of those demonstrations which usually evince a favorable reception. The superior officers were obliged to post the troops through the capital, and to plant artillery at the principal approaches. In the towns through which I passed, (which were but a few, as it was so managed that I should be conducted with as much privacy as possible from one hacienda to another), I was received with ringing of bells, and notwithstanding the harshness with which they were treated by my escort, the inhabitants crowded anxiously to see me, and to bestow upon me the most sincere proofs of their attachment and respect.

After my departure from Mexico, the new government was obliged to resort to force in order to prevent the people from crying out my name; and when the Marquis of Vivanco, as general-in-chief, harangued the troops whom I left at Tacubaya, he had the dissatisfaction to hear them shout, "Live Agustin the First!" and to see that they listened to his address with contempt. These, and a thousand other incidents which might appear too trifling if they were particularized, fully demonstrate that it was not the general will which effected my separation from the supreme command.

I had already said that the moment I should discover that my continuance at the head of affairs tended to interrupt the public tranquillity, I should cheerfully descend from the throne; and that if the nation should choose a form of government which in my view might be prejudicial, I would not contribute to its establish-

ment, because it is not consistent with my principles to act contrary to what I think conducive to the general welfare. But on the other hand, I added, that I would not oppose it, and that my only alternative would be to abandon my country. I said this in October, 1821, to the first junta of government; and I repeated it frequently to the congress, to the instituent junta, to the troops, and to several individuals, both in private and in public. The case for which I had provided arrived; I complied with my word, and I have only to thank my enemies for having afforded me an opportunity of unequivocally showing that my language was always in unison with my intentions.

The greatest sacrifice which I made, has been that of abandoning for ever a country so dear to my heart, which still retains an idolized father whose advanced age rendered it impossible to bring him with me, a sister whom I cannot think of without regret, and kinsmen, and many a friend who were the companions of my infancy and youth, and whose converse formed in better days the happiness of my life!

Mexicans! this production will reach your hands. Its principal object is to show you that your best friend has never deceived the affection and confidence which you prodigally bestowed upon him. My gratitude to you shall cease only with my latest breath. When you instruct your children in the history of our common country, tell them betimes to think with kindness of the first Chief of the army of the Three Guarantees; and if by any chance my children should stand in need of your protection, remember that their father spent the best season of his life in laboring for your welfare! Receive my last adieus, and may every happiness await you!

At my country-house in the vicinity of
LEGHORN, 27th of September, 1823. }

POSTSCRIPT.

Not having been allowed, as I had intended, to print this work in Tuscany, the time that has elapsed since I finished it, has afforded me an opportunity to observe that the events which have taken place in Mexico, since my departure, fully confirm everything which I have said with respect to the congress. It has been seen endeavoring to prolong the term of its functions, in order to engross all the different branches of power, and to form a constitution according to its own pleasure; a proceeding inconsistent with the limited authority which has been delegated to it, and demonstrative of its contempt for the public voice, and for the decisive representations addressed to it from the provinces, desiring that it should confine itself to the formation of a new convocatoria. Hence, it has happened that the provinces, in order to force the congress to compliance, have taken such strong steps as even with force of arms to refuse to obey its ordinances, and those of the government which it has created. This fact is an unequivocal proof of the bad opinion which the people entertain of the majority of the deputies. A new congress necessarily requires time and expense; and, therefore, it may be inferred, that the people never would have adopted the idea of forming such a congress, if they looked upon the majority of the present deputies as wise, temperate, and virtuous legislators, or if the proceedings of those deputies, since their reinstatement in the sanctuary of the laws, had been conformable to the general welfare, instead of being subservient to their own ambitious and sinister designs.

LONDON, January, 1824.

The new congress passed an act annulling the coronation of Iturbide, the acts of his government, and several of the decrees of the former congress. It also settled upon him during life a pension of twenty-five thousand 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 eighteen thousand dollars annually. This condition, unfortunately for him, he did not keep; his partisans encouraged him to return and head them; imitating Napoleon, he complied with the invitation, and leaving Europe secretly, he landed at Soto la Marina, on the 8th of July, 1824. Here he terminated his life, like Murat, having been immediately arrested by the authorities and shot.

On the 14th of November, 1824, Count Charles de Beneski, a Polish exile, who had long been attached to Iturbide, and who seems really to have borne towards him the same devotion Poniatowski entertained to Napoleon, published in New York an account of the last moments of the ex-emperor, and of the conduct of Garza, who betrayed him to his enemies, and also seemed to tantalize the unhappy man with alternate depressions and exaltations of hope in a manner altogether unworthy of a gentleman and a soldier. At one period of the march from Soto la Marina to the seat of the congress, the whole escort absolutely pronounced in favor of Iturbide, though but a few hours afterwards he was a close prisoner.

After his execution the body was followed to the grave by the congress, which had ordered him shot, and he was mourned by them as a public benefactor.

One of two things is undeniable, either Iturbide was a patriot, and his execution was altogether unjustifiable,

or he was a traitor, and did not deserve better. In either case the congress was wrong.

It must not be forgotten that Iturbide landed without arms from a peaceful vessel, and that the decree by virtue of which he was executed, had been passed during his absence and never been imparted to him.

He died like a brave man, receiving two balls in his head, and two in that breast which he maintained had ever beat with hope and love for his country; and when we look over the long array of Mexican rulers, we cannot find one who had done so much good for his country and so little harm. The idea that Mexico is capable of self-government has long been exploded, and should it happen that God in his wrath send her a king (and such, in fact, are all her presidents and dictators), it cannot be doubted that it would be better for herself and her neighbors, that this monarch should be one of her own children, than a member of the exhausted Spanish Bourbon family.

Iturbide would have governed Mexico ably. He knew the wants of his country, her great men, her vices, and her virtues, and had he lived, history would probably have known no Santa Anna, no Alaman or Ampudia. The Mexican flag would now have been respectable, and not have been looked upon as the equal of the robber states of Barbary, to be restrained within the bounds of national law by fear alone.

He seems to have foreseen all that happened at Soto la Marina before he left Italy, and under that feeling to have written the following letter to his friend and solicitor:

"My dear Sir,—It is probable that as soon as my departure is known, different opinions may be expressed, and that some of them may be falsely colored. I

wish, therefore, that you should know the truth in an authentic manner.

"By a misfortune that is much to be deplored, the principal provinces of Mexico are at this moment dis-united; all those of Goatemala, New Galicia, Oajaca, Yacatecas, Queretaro, and others, sufficiently attest this fact.

"Such a state of things exposes the independence of the country to extreme peril. Should she lose it, she must live for ages to come in frightful slavery.

"My return has been solicited by different parts of the country, which consider me necessary to the establishment of unanimity there and to the consolidation of the government. I do not presume to form such an opinion of myself; but as I am assured that it is in my power to contribute in a great degree to the amalgamation of the separate interests of the provinces, and to tranquillize in part those angry passions which are sure to lead to the most disastrous anarchy, I go with such an object before me, uninfluenced by any other ambition than the glory of effecting the happiness of my countrymen, and of discharging those obligations which I owe to the land of my birth—obligations which have received additional force from the event of her independence. When I abdicated the crown of Mexico, I did so with pleasure, and my sentiments remain unchanged.

"If I succeed in realizing my plan to the extent which I desire, Mexico will soon present a government consolidated, and a people acting upon one opinion, and co-operating in the same object. They will all recognise those burdens, which, if the present government continued, would only fall upon a few; and the mining and commercial transactions of the country will

assume an energy and a firmness of which they are now deprived. In anarchy nothing is secure.

"I have no doubt that the English nation, which knows how to think, will easily infer from this statement the probable political situation of Mexico.

"I conclude with again recommending to your attentions my children, in my separation from whom will be seen an additional proof of the real sentiments which animate the heart of your very sincere friend,

AGUSTIN DE YTURBIDE.

"MICHAEL JOSEPH QUIN, Esq., *Gray's Inn.*"

Count de Beneski was tried afterwards for participating in the schemes which induced Iturbide to return, but was acquitted, and but lately resided in Mexico in high repute and esteem. If Iturbide deserved death, Beneski should have shared his fate. Mexico now honors the latter; why then was Iturbide executed?

The family of Iturbide have for some years resided in the cities of Washington and Philadelphia, and won popularity and universal esteem. One of his sons has, we believe, returned to Mexico, and is at this time a colonel of cavalry, and has the reputation of having inherited his father's courage as well as his name.

The Spanish troops had been removed during the reign of Iturbide from the republic, with the exception of a few who continued to hold out the strong castle of San Juan de Ulua, situated in the sea, within six hundred yards of Vera Cruz. Here they remained, obstinately refusing to depart or to surrender, until the 20th of December, 1825, when they evacuated the fortress, to the great relief of the citizens of the place, which lay under their guns.

After the abdication of Iturbide, the executive power

was confined to a commission of three, until a constitution could be provided by a competent assembly. After some time, this was effected, and, on the 4th of October, 1824, a constitution, framed almost entirely upon that of the basis of the United States, was solemnly proclaimed; the Catholic religion was, however, supported to the exclusion of all others, and there was no trial by jury. The territory was divided into nineteen states and four territories, corresponding nearly in names and limits with the *intendencias* under the Spanish regime; the general legislature was composed of two chambers, constituted nearly like those of the United States, and the chief executive power was committed to a president, chosen for four years by the entire majority of the states; during whose absence or inability, a vice-president was charged with the same duties. In the election of these chief officers, the candidate having the greatest number of votes after the president, became vice-president. In the first election, General Victoria was made president, and General Bravo vice-president. These appointments were in every respect unfortunate. Victoria and Bravo, though active and persevering as leaders of guerillas, were totally unfit to guide the concerns of a state; they were both men of moderate capacity, uneducated, and unacquainted with any other than the simplest relations between the governors and the governed. Moreover, they had long been rivals, and the mode of their election only served to excite jealousy and mistrust. Fears of such results were entertained at the time of their election, and were afterwards fully confirmed.

CHAPTER VI.

MEXICAN REPUBLIC.

Recognition by the United States of the independence of the revolted colonies of Spain—Congress of Panama—Mr. Poinsett plenipotentiary to Mexico—Treaty of alliance and commerce—Boundary question—Victoria president—Influence of Masonry on politics—Triumph of the Yorkino party.

WE have heretofore only incidentally noticed the connexion of the United States with the Mexican revolution, as it had had but little influence on the contest. While Ferdinand was a prisoner, there had been no communication between the Union and any of the rival authorities. An attempt to procure the recognition of Joseph Bonaparte failed before Congress in 1809, while on the other hand, Don Jose de Onis, the agent of the central junta, was never recognised *in that capacity*. The earthquake at Caraccas, and the offer of food by the nation, afforded an opportunity of indirect intercourse, and *eclaireurs* were sent to Chili, La Plata, Venezuela, &c., at different times.

In 1818, a proposition was officially made by the government of the United States to that of Great Britain, for a concerted and provisional acknowledgment of the independence of La Plata; it was declined, and is believed to have given offence to the sovereigns assembled in conference at Aix la Chapelle. Public opinion, however, grew stronger in the United States in favor of the patriots of Spanish America, being daily increased by the details of the horrible proceedings of Morillo and the other monsters in Colombia, and by the seizure of the