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 *intendencies* 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

vessels of the United States on the coast of that country in virtue of the pretended blockade. Many attempts were also made in Congress, particularly by Mr. Henry Clay, to procure a public recognition of the independence of those portions of the southern continent from which the Spaniards had been expelled. At length, on the 8th of March, 1822, President Monroe, in a message to the national legislature, declared his conviction, that the United States could not consistently, with justice or with policy, longer delay the commencement of relations with these countries, as they were *de facto* free from the authority of their former European rulers. On the day after this message had been sent, the Spanish minister at Washington remonstrated, officially, against the recommendation thus made, and he subsequently communicated to the president the decrees of the cortes, protesting against the admission, by any other government, of the claims of those countries to be considered as sovereign states. Nevertheless, both houses of congress adopted the views presented in the message, and on the 4th of May, appropriations to a large amount were made by the house of representatives, for the expenses of such missions as the president should think proper to send to the countries in question.

Propositions were also made for a general congress of all the governments of North and South America, to meet at Panama, and after a long debate the congress determined to send delegates, by a vote taken April 21st, 1826; and accordingly Mr. Richard Anderson, envoy to Colombia, and John Sergeant, of Philadelphia, were appointed. Mr. Anderson, however, died on his passage, and Mr. Sergeant having deferred his passage until too late, the United States were not represented.

The result of this congress of delegates from Peru,

Mexico, Central America, and Colombia, at which agents from Great Britain and Holland were present, was the production of treaties of offensive and defensive alliance, to which all the other powers of America might accede. It separated to meet again at Tacubaya in February, 1827. The treaties it concluded, however, were not ratified; no congress met at Tacubaya, and all its schemes ended in smoke.

In 1825, Mr. Poinsett arrived in the city of Mexico as plenipotentiary of the United States, after having previously filled high charges of a similar nature in other countries. About the same time Great Britain was represented by Mr. Ward, and to these two gentlemen the world is indebted for almost all the reliable information it possesses about Mexico. Mr. Ward immediately concluded a treaty of peace in behalf of England, which, however, was not ratified, and Mr. Poinsett sought to negotiate a similar one for his government. Mr. Poinsett also sought to obtain the assent of Mexico to a new line further to the west than the one then existing by virtue of the treaty with Spain, which had been settled February 22, 1819, when Florida became a part of the United States. The Mexican minister of foreign relations was however, a shrewd politician, and would, on this latter point, conclude no negotiations; probably seeing that this was an exhibition of a desire of aggregation, since certainly maintained by the United States. All Mr. Poinsett could do was to conclude a treaty of alliance and commerce, which he did on the 10th of July, 1826. This treaty was not, however, ratified by the United States, the senate of which declared that it would approve of no treaty unless the boundaries should be settled according to the terms of 1819. It may be said, as the United States had never refused to confirm that boundary,

and Mexico had insisted upon an examination (which was never made) of the territory, in order to fix a new one, this resolution seems to have been at least unnecessary, and may perhaps be esteemed as frivolous. Possibly, it may have been intended to accelerate the movements of the Mexican executive upon the subject.

Mr. Poinsett was then instructed by his government, on the 15th of March, 1827, to propose to purchase the desired tract of territory from Mexico, so as to fix the western boundary of the United States on the river Colorado, or even on the Rio del Norte; but this proposal was rejected by the Mexicans, and years passed on without any determination either of the limits, or of the rules and principles by which the intercourse between the two republics was to be conducted, although this intercourse was daily increasing. Meanwhile, grants of land in Texas were daily made to individuals, natives of the United States, and of other countries, as well as Mexicans, and a population was rising in that region, essentially foreign to Mexico in language, habits, and religion. From Great Britain, Mexico received a vast amount of capital, which was expended in almost every instance fruitlessly, in attempts to work new silver mines, or to restore to use those which had been abandoned; the mining operations were, however, much improved, and the proportion of the precious metal obtained has been much greater since than before the separation from Spain.

During the administration of Guadalupe Victoria, little was done to bring Mexico to that state of quiet and security, so indispensable for the happiness and advancement of a country. The finances were badly administered, and peculation was openly practised in every direction. The president and vice-president, as before

stated, were enemies; the latter headed the opposition, and actually, on one occasion, in January, 1828, appeared at the head of forces in insurrection against the constituted authorities. He was, however, on this occasion, defeated and made prisoner by Guerrero. Independently of the evils arising from the personal ambition of various individuals, there were strong parties, at war with each other upon material points of government. One party wished to maintain the privileges of the aristocracy and the clergy, and for that purpose was desirous of seeing established a central system of government; the other, a democratic party, wished to reduce these privileges, and to maintain the federal constitution. By the exertions of the latter, a law was passed in 1826, putting an end to all titles of nobility, and restricting parents with regard to the distribution of their property among their children. Another question, which strongly agitated the people, was, whether the Spaniards should be allowed to remain in the republic or not; by the influence of the same party, the expulsion of this class of the population was effected, in virtue of a decree passed on the 8th of March, 1828.

The affairs of the state also became involved with Masonry, which produced as much evil in Mexico as it appeared once to threaten in our own country. Those who are adepts in Masonry, know that there exists a schism in the masonic world on the subject of rites, ceremonies, and opinions; one party adhering to those of the *Scotch* Lodge, (*the word Lodge is here used collectively,*) the other submitting to the rules of *York;* the lodges in the United States are all constituted upon the York principles. Masonic societies, professing the Scotch rites, had existed in Mexico for some time previous to the extinction of the Spanish authority, and

during the wars of the revolution they had afforded facilities for the propagation of plans of insurrection, and of other information among the people. On the establishment of the republic, these societies were filled chiefly with persons professing aristocratic principles of government; they were used as the means of combining operations for the maintenance of such principles, and were accordingly favored by the representatives of Great Britain, which was then by no means anxious for the extension of the republican system throughout America. The grand master of the Scotch masons was General Bravo, who was for some time their favorite candidate for the presidency; they had endeavored to raise him to that station at the first election, and are supposed to have been the advisers of his insurrection in 1828, which terminated so unfortunately for him. There were some York lodges in Mexico, the members of which were democratic in their principles, and opposed politically the *Escoceses*.

On his arrival, Mr. Poinsett was induced to obtain a charter for the establishment of a York lodge in the city of Mexico, which was granted by De Witt Clinton, of New York, at that time high in authority in the masonic order; and thenceforth the York lodges were generally diffused and extended, and the two terms, *Yorkino* and *Escocese*, became what whig and tory are in England. Mr. Poinsett, it may be presumed, never had any connexion with either branch of the order in Mexico. In 1828, the second election for president and vice-president of Mexico was to be held. The Escoceses failing in their plan to have their grand master Bravo elected, put forward the minister of war, General Gomez Pedraza, a man of strong character and capacity, much disliked, however,

in the army, on account of his arbitrary principles. The candidate of the Yorkinos was General Vincent Guerrero, the persevering Indian chief, who had just defeated and taken Bravo, who had never bent to the threats or bribes of the Spaniards, and had never despaired of the independence of his country; bold, honest, and frank, but weak and illiterate, he was much better qualified for conducting a rapid march through a region occupied by enemies, than for counteracting intrigues, and devising measures for the recovery of the finances, and for the pacification of a troubled country. The election was held in September, and the result was that Pedraza was chosen by a small majority over Guerrero. The announcement created great satisfaction on the one hand, and a corresponding disappointment on the other. Scarcely was it made known ere an insurrection broke out.

General Santa Anna, on account of some disturbances, had been removed from his command at Vera Cruz, and taken up his residence at Jalapa. Here, considering the election of Pedraza as offering a good opportunity for an insurrection, he prevailed on the troops to join him, and, on the 10th of September, 1828, followed by a large body of men, he suddenly left Jalapa, and marched upon the fortress of Perote, situated thirty miles distant on the road to Mexico. Having obtained possession of this fortress, and of a large amount of public money, he declared himself commander of the liberating army, and proposed his *plan* for the reform of the government, which is known in Mexican history as the *Plan of Perote*. By the terms of this plan, the election of Pedraza was pronounced fraudulent, and the legislature was required to make a new choice.

President Victoria immediately declared Santa Anna

an outlaw, and sent forces against him under generals Calderon and Rincon, by whom he was at least kept at bay. In the capital, however, was a strong party in favor of this plan of Perote, headed by Lorenzo de Zavala, the governor of Mexico, a man of influence, talent, and honesty, and possessing sufficient firmness for his support, in the trying scenes to which he was exposed. The government which was in favor of Pedraza, suspecting Zavala to be engaged against him, ordered his arrest, but he escaped to the mountains, and joining other friends, they planned a scheme of resistance. It was carried into effect on the 30th of November, 1828, when a body of soldiery seized a large building, called the *Acordada*, opposite the *Alameda* or public gardens of the capital, and took possession of the arms stored there. The excuse for this movement, was to have the Spaniards expelled; but this was soon forgotten, in the general cry of *Long live Guerrero*. That chief appeared and headed the troops and people; nearly all the foreigners except the members of the American legation quitted the city, and for three days Mexico was the scene of combats and plunder. A party of the mob attacked the house of Mr. Poinsett, who was accused of protecting some Spaniards; he, however, advanced on the balcony and unfolded the star-spangled banner of his country, at the sight of which the crowd cheered and passed on.

The result of this movement was the triumph of the Yorkino party; a new election took place, in which Guerrero was chosen president, and Don Anastasio Bustamente vice-president, Pedraza being sent in exile to the United States. Victoria retired into private life, and the new chiefs of the state entered upon their respective duties on the 1st of April, 1829. Santa

Anna, after having been nearly forced to surrender to Calderon at Oaxaca, was himself placed at the head of the very army which had deposed him, and was restored to his government. Mr. Poinsett soon returned home, leaving Mr. Butler chargé of the legation of the United States.

It is now time to refer to the man of Mexico whose history, more than any other's, embodies that of the nation for twenty-six years, and to review the progress we have made towards completion of our task. We have thus far followed the successive transitions of the state of Mexico, during the present century. We have observed it under the viceroys, bowed down by an absolute despotism, its people so oppressed that they dared not even look upward. We have seen it in possession, in fact, of a wealth which equals the treasures of fairy history, yet pouring out all its resources at the feet of a monarch beyond the ocean, who cared not for its devotion, and valued its wealth only as a means of perpetuating its servitude and preserving his authority over other of his dominions. We have seen it so long governed by foreigners, that it looked on the rule of a native as impossible, and so constantly a prey to tyrannical power, cupidity, and avarice, that it looked on justice and humanity as superhuman virtues. We have seen the people superstitious, abject, and humiliated, looking on heretic and rebel as synonymous terms, thinking any one who dared exert the precious boon of reason as derelict in duty and loyalty. We have seen that people, animated by the Promethean fire of Liberty of Thought, burst the mental fetters which weighed on it, and rise to the dignity of thinking men. We have seen its children enact scenes which recall the brightest days of ancient Greece, and seen its martyrs march to the place of exe-

cution cheered by that consciousness, which the old English patriots were so awake to, that their blood would but increase the fertility of the soil of Freedom, and aware that "the good old cause must triumph."

We have seen the great men who had won the liberty of Mexico pass away, one by one hurried from view by war and disease. Guerrero, Victoria, all have passed from the scene as utterly as Hidalgo, Morelos, and Iturbide; and we now behold Bravo, Bustamente, and Farias occupying a position subordinate to Alaman and Santa Anna, the two powerful minds which would long ago have destroyed even the shadow of Mexican nationality, had it not been that they kept each other in equipoise, or, like two poisons, neutralized each other.

We have now to trace a sad descent. We are to see the people gradually become corrupt, until it appears almost to lose the faculty of distinguishing right and wrong. We are to watch the course of its principal men, see them become gradually more degraded, and cease at last even to pretend to virtue. We shall see the treasury looked upon as spoils and proclaimed as an inducement to win partisans.

We shall learn that a people may have no annals, and yet not be blessed, and see that it is not more unimportant to mankind, that the fate of every animal which falls in the great *plaza de toros* should be chronicled, than the defeat of the grasping and ignobly ambitious chieftains, who rise successively on the horizon and disappear from it, should be recorded. We shall see their threats derided, see their fortresses bombarded almost without resistance, and see them incompetent to profit by the teachings of experience, rush headlong into a contest whence there can be no honorable egress with

safety, yet see them unable to resolve to fight like men in defence of their national existence.

We shall see evidence after evidence of this degradation rise before us, until we shall almost be inclined to doubt the truth of that holy maxim, that nowhere has any race or class been formed to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to another.

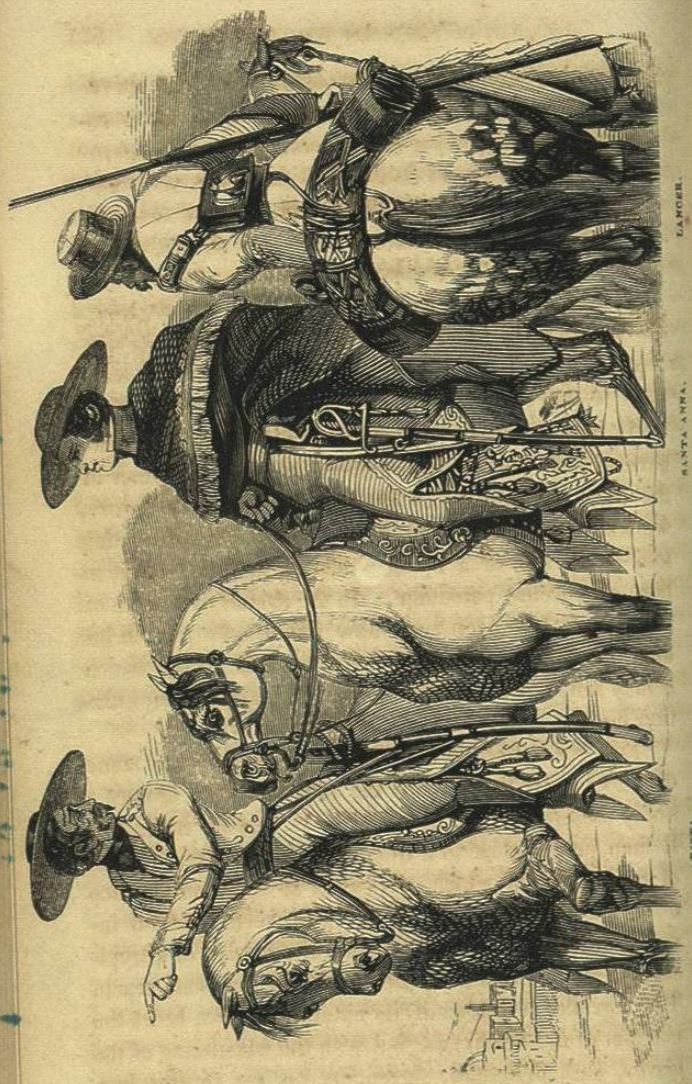
The person who probably has contributed more than any other to bring about this condition of affairs has been General Santa Anna. In the following pages, we shall always find him him watching his opportunity, and, remembering the maxim of *divide et impera*, seeking to array the other eminent men of Mexico against each other, and uniformly taking advantage of their collisions to strike out a new path for himself. Wily and astute, his hand has rarely been seen, though all have been convinced he only has pulled the wires in obedience to which the political puppets have moved, so that though all hold him accountable for most that has occurred, we can but confess it must be only on the grounds, that "whenever a series of crises occurs, and one man is uniformly found to take advantage of all of them, it is *probable* he has contributed to bring it about."

We shall witness the exhibition of great intellectual power, of a ready wit and cunning hand, which never has deceived him, and see him gather resources almost from his defeats. We shall see the hundred minor chieftains, ever anxious to ruin each other, bend submissively to him, and look on him with a devotion other men pay only to their country.

We shall watch him, while a prisoner in a hostile camp, exerting an influence in the capital of his country, and rushing from the torpor of long repose into action,

to make political capital out of a repulse which would have ruined another.

From the contemplation of this period of Mexican history we shall rise with disgust, wondering for what inscrutable purpose God has given so fair a land in captivity to such a ruler, and hesitating if the old creed of Visigothic conquerors, that beautiful countries were confided to degraded races until a firmer and worthier stock were ready to occupy them, may not be true; or perhaps shrink back with terror from that climate and soil which has made of the children of two such rugged races as the Spaniard of the fifteenth century and the North American Indian, beings as degraded as are the present Mexicans. We shall be inclined to doubt if the country be not in worse hands than when it was ruled by Montezuma, and if the unfurling of the Spanish flag in America has not retarded the progress of human enlightenment. Finally, we shall wonder how long Mexico will be punished, and if any servitude will purify her from her many sins.



CHAPTER VII.

SANTA ANNA.

Santa Anna—Mango de Clavo—Pronounces against Iturbide—President—Zacatecas—Texan War—Revolution—Exile—Proclamation, &c.

In regard to Don Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, we have as little positive information, as about any other of the Mexican military chieftains. Of his early history, we know nothing certainly—one account representing him as the son of a Spanish officer, and the other, as born of obscure parentage. In the sketch of the life of Iturbide, it has been seen how important a part in his dethronement was sustained by Santa Anna, of which it may not, however, be improper to make a recapitulation here.

The road from Vera Cruz to Mexico, for some distance, is by the side of the sea, and then crosses a sandy desert, barren and sterile as can be imagined. It then passes close to a tranquil bay, the green ripples of the surface of which, after even so short an absence from the broad expanse of the gulf, seem grateful indeed, and then becomes lost amid the masses of a tropical forest, extending farther than the eye can reach. The traveller, even amid its natural arcades, hears the murmur of the ocean mingled with the whispering of the leaves, and, delighted, surrenders his ear to this harmony, which, if he travel in a *Mexican coach* (a litter or palanquin), lulls him to sleep; or, if on horseback,