

Ferdinand yielded unwillingly to the views of the insurgents, and the aristocracy of Mexico feared that the evils of the French Revolution would influence the future of their own country.

Now arose a division of opinions. The great party of Independence divided itself into several sections, each striving for the adoption of its own peculiar views as to the treatment of the Spaniards and the mode of government.

It was at this juncture—when such dissensions were at the highest—that the Viceroy entrusted the command of the Army of the South to Colonel Iturbide.

This soldier, who afterwards played so important a part, and rose to such prominence in Mexico, was a handsome and highly-cultured creole. Although devoted to his country, he remained inactive during the odious scenes which attended the early stages of the revolution; in fact, he presently opposed himself in arms and refused to be allied with the cause which had been dishonoured by the misdeeds of many of its leaders.

It has been said that "Buonaparte in Europe and Iturbide in Mexico are the two most extraordinary men referred to in modern history."

Receiving his promotion from the rank of ensign to that of colonel, in consideration of his bravery in the field, he eventually obtained the command of the Army of the North; but being falsely accused of acts of violence (of which he was afterwards honourably acquitted), he was disgusted at the conduct of his accusers, and retired into private life, and held himself aloof from 1816 to 1820.

It was during this recess that the ideas of Iturbide underwent a complete change. His cultivated intellect grasped the meaning of the "Plan of Iguala," and duly estimated its value in all its bearings. It was as follows:—

ARTICLE I.

The Mexican nation is independent of the Spanish nation and of every other, even those on this continent.

ARTICLE 2.

Its Religion shall be Catholic, which is that professed by all its inhabitants.

ARTICLE 3.

The nation shall be *one*, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

ARTICLE 4.

The Government shall be a Constitutional Monarchy.

ARTICLE 5.

An Assembly shall be elected, composed of persons enjoying the highest reputation in the different societies in which they move.

ARTICLE 6.

The Assembly shall meet under the presidency of his Excellency the Conde de Venadito, the present Viceroy.

ARTICLE 7.

It shall govern in the name of the nation according to the laws now in force; and its principal function shall be to convocate—adopting such dispositions as it may deem expedient for that purpose—a Congress to form the Constitution most suitable for the country.

ARTICLE 8.

His Majesty Ferdinand VII. shall be invited to occupy the throne of the Empire; and in case of refusal on his part, then the Princes, Don Carlos and Francisco de Paulo, shall severally be invited.

ARTICLE 9.

If His Majesty Ferdinand VII. and his august brothers decline to accept this invitation, the nation shall be free to call to the imperial throne such member of the reigning families as it may please to choose.

ARTICLE 10.

The formation of the Constitution, and the oath of the Emperor to observe it faithfully, must precede his entry into the country.

ARTICLE 11.

The distinction of caste, established by the Spanish laws, which deprives some of the rights of citizens, is abolished. All the inhabitants of the country are citizens and on an equality, and the means for advancement are open to virtue and merit.

ARTICLE 12.

An army shall be organized to defend Religion, Independence, and Union ; and being charged to guarantee these three grand interests, it shall be called the army of the Three Guarantees.

ARTICLE 13.

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

ARTICLE 14.

It shall strictly observe the military ordinances now in force.

ARTICLE 15.

There shall be no other promotions than those due to seniority, and such as become necessary for the benefit of the service.

ARTICLE 16.

This army shall be considered as troops of the line.

ARTICLE 17.

The former partisans of the Independence who immediately give in their adhesion to this Plan shall be considered as belonging to the Army.

ARTICLE 18.

The patriots and peasants who may hereafter adhere shall be considered as provincial Militia.

ARTICLE 19.

The secular and regular priests shall remain in the same position in which they may be found.

ARTICLE 20.

All public functionaries, both civil and ecclesiastical, political and military, who may adhere to the cause of Independence shall remain in office, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

ARTICLE 21.

Functionaries of every description who do not attach themselves to the cause of Independence shall be deprived of office and leave the country, taking with them their families and effects.

ARTICLE 22.

The military officers shall act in accordance with the general instructions conformable with the Plan, which shall be sent to them without delay.

ARTICLE 23.

No accused person shall be condemned to capital punishment by the military commandants. The individuals accused of treason towards the nation, which is the greatest crime after treason to our Divine Master, shall be sent to the fortress of Barrabas, where they shall remain until such time as the Congress may be able to decide on the punishment to be inflicted.

ARTICLE 24.

As it is indispensable that this Plan—the object of which is the prosperity of the country—be put into execution, every individual belonging to the army must defend it if need be to the last drop of his blood.

From the Town of Iguala, the 24th February, 1821.

But Iturbide was unable to carry out this Plan, which he was convinced would be to the benefit of his country; he therefore offered himself to the Viceroy and was received into active service. He was selected by Apodaca to oppose Guerrero, the last of the chiefs of the insurrection of 1810, who had, since the death of Mina, been carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Spaniards.

Iturbide was surprised by this famous soldier, who was accompanied by only 140 Indians, one night when encamped on a plateau with 1500 men under his command, and had to retreat; the darkness of the night deceiving him as to the number of the attacking party.

Iturbide, struck by the audacity of this manœuvre, and being acquainted with the antecedents of Guerrero, forbore to renew the fight and desired a coalition; in which he was willingly supported by his subordinate officers.

Guerrero, enchanted with the "Plan of Iguala," which Iturbide brought under his notice, agreed to join him in carrying it into effect.

Iturbide became the hero of the day; and his name was received with great enthusiasm by the people, who eagerly co-operated in the endeavour to establish those principles which were so consonant with their feelings.

A proclamation, drawn up in a moderate tone, was issued, in which Iturbide was styled "Conciliator," and his adherents, the "Army of Deliverance."

Bravo reappeared and joined Iturbide. Other generals of note soon allied themselves to the popular cause; and the subsequent triumphant march of the insurgents—a march unstained by any act unworthy of civilized warfare—sealed the fate of the Spanish rule.

The Spaniards, however, determined not to yield their hold on the country without a final struggle; but the increasing forces of their opponents appeared to overawe their soldiers, and Apodaca, who was unable to restore order, was replaced by Novella.

Santa Anna, one of the insurgent chiefs who afterwards

became famous, offered his services to Iturbide and hastened to form a junction with him.

Leaving La Soledad with 200 veterans and 1000 pardoned criminals, he marched triumphantly across the country, proclaiming *en route* the "Plan of Iguala," and within a few months he was at the head of 10,000 disciplined troops.

On arriving at Vera Cruz, where he met with a cordial reception, Santa Anna himself unfurled the tricolor flag.

On the 23rd of July the new Viceroy, General O'Donoju, disembarked at Vera Cruz to take command of the Spanish army; but on the arrival of Santa Anna, who immediately besieged the town, O'Donoju discerned the effect which previous defeats had made on the Spanish soldiers. Discouragement and disaffection pervaded the garrison; and, perceiving that resistance was hopeless, he asked for, and obtained, an interview with Santa Anna.

This led to a cessation of hostilities pending the arrival of Iturbide, to whom Santa Anna deferred the settlement of affairs.

Iturbide directed the conference to be held at Cordova, and that the person of O'Donoju should be respected.

On the 24th of August was signed the "Treaty of Cordova," which recognised the principles of the "Plan of Iguala" and declared the independence of Mexico.

Three distinct representatives of parties combined in establishing an Independent Monarchy in Mexico:—Iturbide, the creole; Guerrero, the revolutionary Indian; and O'Donoju, the Spaniard.

On the 27th of September 1821, Iturbide, at the head of 16,000 men, made a triumphant march through the City of Mexico. The Act of Independence was proclaimed, and as an acknowledgment of the services rendered to his country Iturbide received a million dollars, twenty square leagues of land, and was made General in Chief of the Army.