

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST VICEROYS, AND THE STRUGGLES FOR INDEPENDENCE.

The Last Viceroys. — Felix Berenguer de Marquina. — José de Iturrigaray, the Monarchist. — Pedro Garibay, the Revolutionist. — The Archbishop of Mexico becomes viceroy. — His energetic rule. — Premonitory symptoms of revolt. — Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the Father of Mexican Independence. — Plans for revolt. — Army of the Insurgents. — Attack upon Guanajuato. — Valladolid. — March towards the Capital. — Opposition of the Royalists. — Battle at Monte de las Cruces. — Mistake and Defeat of Hidalgo. — He raises another army. — Calleja del Rey in Guanajuato. — Hidalgo organizes his government. — Battle at Puente de Calderon. — Capture and Execution of Hidalgo. — The struggle for Independence revived by Rayon. — Morelos, and his military exploits. — The first Mexican Congress. — Declaration of Independence. — Felix Maria Calleja del Rey, the Cruel. — Execution of Matamoras. — First Mexican Constitution. — Capture and Execution of Morelos. — Death of the Inquisition. — Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, the Unfortunate. — The Expedition of Mina. — Vicente Guerrero. — Agustin de Iturbide. — His schemes and movements. — Plan de Iguala. — Apodaca retires. — Francisco Novella. — The Independents triumph. — Juan O'Donoju, the last of the Viceroys.

THE nineteenth century dawned upon New Spain with the clouds of war hovering over the country. The first viceroy of the new century (the fifty-fifth in the whole long list of viceroys) was Don Felix Berenguer

de Marquina, Chief of the Squadron and ex-Governor of the Mariana Islands. Little of importance occurred during the rule of this naval officer, who seems to have been somewhat Quixotic, for among other measures adopted by him was the suppression of bull-fights. He was called upon to put down an uprising of the Indians in Tepic, and also to deal with a fillibustering expedition across the northern border led by an American named Nolan. The leader of this expedition was taken prisoner and executed by the Spanish troops in 1802. The Spanish government failed to approve all of the measures of Marquina, so he resigned in 1803 and was succeeded by Don José de Iturrigaray, whose administration was an active one, but ended disastrously for him. He completed the celebrated Puente del Rey (King's Bridge), now the Puente Nacional on the road from Vera Cruz to Jalapa; and was the patron of the celebrated architect of Celaya, Tresguerras, by whom was built the causeway and bridge over the Laja, whence Celaya takes its name. He organized a militia, and so disposed the troops in towns along the coast as to resist such foreign aggressions as were feared would result from

the declaration of war between England and Spain. He was a thorough economist, and encouraged home industry and the sale of home manufactures. And as proof of the prosperity of New Spain during his rule, it is mentioned that the Mint coined in 1805, in silver alone, more than \$27,000,000, and that in 1806 Mexico sent \$31,000 to the widows and orphans of the victims of the great battle of Trafalgar. His administration was marked by two *autos de fé*, wherein two priests who were the authors of irreligious books, were executed; and it was at this time that Baron Von Humboldt resided in Mexico, in the house Calle de San Augustin, No. 3, marked by a tablet mentioning the fact.

Iturrigaray dabbled somewhat in repairs to the celebrated *Tajo de Nochistongo*. But some of his economical measures excited the animosity of those who were not directly benefited thereby, and his administration was brought to an end on the night of the 16th of September (a noted date in Mexican history as we shall see), 1808, by an event that gave him the title of "The Monarchist." The Audiencia and some of the Spanish residents believed (whether with or without cause seems still uncertain) that Iturrigaray, taking

advantage of the condition of Spain, weakened as it was by the invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the absence of Ferdinand VII., was plotting to establish an independent monarchy in Mexico and to wear the crown thereof himself. A party of five hundred Spaniards, hastily organized, with Don Gabriel Yermo, a rich sugar planter, at the head, surrounded the viceregal palace, killed the guards, captured the viceroy and his family, took them first to San Juan de Ulua, and afterwards hastened them off to Spain as prisoners. It is alleged on behalf of "the Monarchist" that Yermo, in raising this opposition to the Viceroy, was actuated by purely personal motives. He wished to evade the payment of \$200,000 borrowed from Iturrigaray.

To the next viceroy, Don Pedro Garibay, historians have given the title "the Revolutionist." He was an old soldier who had made his career in Mexico, and was made viceroy by the Spanish insurgents who had deposed Iturrigaray. He was subservient to the Spaniards and sent all the money he could get from Mexico to aid the Spanish government in its troubles at home. His rule lasted but a short time, — September, 1808,

to July, 1809. The Spanish government, already fallen to pieces at home, was on the wane in Mexico. Ideas of an independent government, of "home rule," had taken hold of various persons, and the subject was being freely discussed. There were those who were not afraid to announce publicly that the cause of Independence awaited only a suitable leader. It was at this time that a mysterious murder occurred in the archiepiscopal palace in Mexico. It was that of a lawyer named Verdad, who has consequently been called the first chief and proto-martyr of Mexican independence.

Upon the removal of Garibay, "the Revolutionist," — in default of a monarch in Spain to appoint a successor, a "*junta central*" requested Francisco Javier Lizana, Archbishop of Mexico, to assume the viceregal office. To devote himself to the functions of the civil office, Lizana gave into other hands his archiepiscopal and inquisitorial powers. He was in sympathy with the creoles and exerted his influence in favor of the Independents, whose objects he supposed to be better government in Spain and Mexico. He had been concerned in the deposition of Iturrigaray, but subsequently

expressed his regret. He secured a loan of \$3,000,000, two thirds of which he sent to Spain to aid in the war against Napoleon and the French. But he refused to honor other demands for \$20,000,000 made by Spain upon the treasury of Mexico. He seized the property of the Duke of Terranova and the Marquis of Branciforte, accused of being Bonapartists, publicly burned a proclamation of the Bonapartes, and gave orders to apprehend all who were involved in a conspiracy discovered in Valladolid (Morelia), one of the premonitory symptoms of the coming great revolt. The Archbishop was called to Spain the 10th of May, 1810, to answer charges made by the merchants of Cadiz. His removal was considered as disastrous to the creoles and their cause. The government of New Spain thereupon devolved upon Don Pedro Catani, President of the Audience, who is called the fifty-seventh viceroy. He exercised the functions of that office until the 14th of September, 1810, when the new Viceroy, Don Francisco Javier Venegas, ex-Governor of Cadiz, entered Mexico. Two days later the long-gathering storm burst over the country in all its fury.

Their long-awaited leader suddenly appeared to the view of the discontented Mexicans, in the person of *el cura* Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the priest in the little parish of Dolores, near Guanajuato. He was born the 8th of May, 1753, in poverty, and was educated for the Church in the school of San Nicolas in Valladolid. He afterwards became rector of the school. In 1779 he went to the capital, when he took holy orders and received the degree of Bachelor of Theology. He held various livings before becoming, on the death of his brother, *cura* of Dolores. He was a sort of universal genius, pursuing a great variety of occupations, all bringing him in contact with the people, and gaining for him great popularity in and around Dolores. This was the man to whom has been given the title of "THE FATHER OF MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE."

Hidalgo revealed to a chosen few his plans for an uprising of the natives and the overthrow of Spanish rule. He made Ignacio Allende, a native of San Miguel el Grande (now called in his honor San Miguel Allende), his trusted lieutenant in his schemes. The father of Allende was a Spaniard, his

mother a Mexican. Although of good family and rich, he had devoted himself to the army and was captain of dragoons at thirty-one. Coming under the influence of Hidalgo, he heartily espoused the cause of Mexican Independence. He gained the confidence and adherence of two other officers of his regiment, Aldama and Abasalo. He was in correspondence with Independent clubs which, ostensibly as literary clubs, discussed the political situation in San Miguel and Queretaro. It was the apprehension of one of these "clubs" and the arrest of its leader, Don Miguel Dominguez, *corregidor* of Queretaro, that precipitated the plans of Hidalgo.

Awakened at two o'clock on the morning of the 16th of September, 1810 (the day ever since regarded as the birthday of Mexican independence), either by Allende or Aldama, and advised that the club at Queretaro had been suppressed, and that its leader was in prison, and that imprisonment awaited him in a few hours unless he could save himself by battle or flight, Hidalgo sprang from bed, called his friends to his aid, and with ten armed men captured the prison of Dolores, liberated the prisoners, and armed them with swords. Then cele-

brating the mass in his church he revealed his plans to all the countrymen as they came in. By these means by daybreak he had gathered about him a devoted body of men and had fired them with zeal for the independence of their country. All Spaniards in the village were secured and then the *cura* and his followers set out on the road to San Miguel.

Allende's regiment swelled the band of patriots, which had increased in number on the way from Dolores to San Miguel. From this large mass Hidalgo organized his army, taking for himself the title of General, Allende being the Lieutenant-General. In passing the church of Atotonilco, the *cura* took therefrom a banner containing a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe (the same banner now preserved in the National Museum), and fixing it upon a lance adopted it as the flag of his army. It gave to the movement the additional enthusiasm to be derived from religion. Shouts of *Viva la religion! Viva nuestra Madre Santisima de Guadalupe! Viva la America y muera el mal gobierno!*—"Long live religion! Long live our Most Holy Mother of Guadalupe! Long live America, and death to bad government!"—rent the

air. This is what now goes by the name of "*el grito de Dolores.*"

The insurgents passed through Chamacuaro, and reached Celaya on the 21st of September. There a further organization was effected. By this time the followers of Hidalgo are said to have numbered between 50,000 and 60,000 men, all filled with the enthusiasm of their leader. As may be imagined, they were wholly without discipline and were miserably equipped. It was decided to march first upon Guanajuato, and on the 25th the army was within sight of that rich city. An order was sent for its surrender, but the Spaniards gathered all their property together and shut themselves up in the Castle Granaditas. The city was attacked, taken, sacked, and the people found therein put to the sword. It was with difficulty that Hidalgo restored order. He finally appointed a civil government in the city, and established an ordnance foundry and a mint. Thus Guanajuato became the capital of the embryo empire.

On the 10th of October the patriot priest set out with the greater part of his troops for Valladolid, arriving there on the 18th, without meeting any opposition on the road.

He obliged the clergy of Valladolid to raise the excommunication levelled at him by the Bishop of Michoacan; augmented his troops by a regiment of dragoons from Patzcuaro, and some of the provincial militia; arranged the civil government of the city; provided himself with supplies; and passed on towards the capital. Taking the road through Acambaro, Maravatio, Tepetongo, Ixtlahuaca, and Toluca (practically the route of the Mexican National Railway between Morelia — as Valladolid is now called — and Toluca at the present day), Hidalgo arrived with a force estimated at 100,000 men at the Monte de las Cruces (near the station of Salazar), about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the city of Mexico. Camp was made there until the 2d of December.

Meanwhile the Viceroy issued orders to the Spanish officers to concentrate and oppose the Independents. The ecclesiastics of New Spain, for the most part partisans of the Spanish government, furbished up their spiritual weapons. The Spanish friars preached furious sermons; and the Holy Office, always on the side of Spain, excommunicated Hidalgo and the most prominent of his companions, and only awaited a chance

to lay hands upon him in order to otherwise punish him. But when the news of the taking of Guanajuato and the approach of the insurgents reached the city of Mexico, it was seen that Hidalgo would have to be encountered by carnal weapons. The people were seized with panic. Some placed their property in the convents for safe-keeping, and either fled or hid themselves. The Viceroy, Venegas, raised an army of three thousand men, well equipped and placed it under the command of Gen. Torcuato Trujillo.

On the 30th of October, 1810, the two armies came into collision at Monte de las Cruces, and a terrible battle ensued. Numbers finally gained the day over better discipline and equipment, and the army of the Viceroy was completely cut to pieces. General Trujillo owed his own life to his excellent horse.

Instead of following up the advantage thus gained and advancing to attack the capital, then in a defenceless state, — a measure which would in all probability have shortened the struggle for independence by ten years, — Hidalgo fell back toward Queretaro. Some of his soldiers deserted. The remainder encountered at Aculco some Spanish troops

raised in the interior, and a disastrous battle followed, resulting in the dispersion of the Independents. Allende went to Guanajuato, accompanied by six or eight of his adjutants. Hidalgo fled to Valladolid, with only a few of his men. There he raised another army of about six thousand men, and set out for Guadalajara. The Independents of the latter city were in arms, and, under Don José Antonio Torres, had driven out the Spanish authorities. Hidalgo reached the city the latter part of November. Allende collected the troops in Guanajuato; but the force not being sufficient to oppose the threatened attack of the Spanish commander-in-chief, Felix Maria Calleja del Rey, who had by that time a considerable body of well-organized troops, he evacuated the city, and hastened by way of Zacatecas to join Hidalgo in Guadalajara. He reached that city on the 12th December.

Calleja del Rey, upon entering Guanajuato, began to punish the city for harboring the Independents. A friar of the order of San Diego, Padre Belaunzaran (afterward Bishop of Nuevo Leon), went out to meet the chief, and laying his hand upon the reins of his horse, commanded him in the name of Holy

Church to desist from the slaughter of the citizens. Calleja obeyed, but not before he had shot fifty of the Mexicans and imprisoned others. Valladolid, abandoned by Hidalgo, was occupied by the Royalists.

In Guadalajara Hidalgo took steps to organize a government, assuming for himself the title of Generalissimo, and naming a Minister of Grace and Justice and a Secretary of State. He sent also a commissioner to secure aid from the United States; but this officer fell into the hands of the Royalists. He issued decrees abolishing slavery, and tithes for the support of religious institutions, and somehow procured means to reorganize and equip his army and place himself in an offensive attitude. The Royalists, however, under Calleja, advanced upon Guadalajara, and compelled him to assume the defensive. As before, they made up in discipline what they lacked in numbers. Hidalgo took up his position at Puente de Calderon, where was fought a bloody battle on the 17th of January, 1811. It is said that the insurgent army numbered again one hundred thousand men, and had ninety-five pieces of artillery under the command of Abasalo. The Royalists had not a tenth of that number of men, but suc-