

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE TREATY OF CÓRDOBA, THE REGENCY, THE EMPIRE, THE PODER EJECUTIVO, AND THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

Provisional Government under the Treaty of Córdoba. — The Three Guarantees. — Triumphal Entry of the Army into the Capital. — Iturbide the Liberator. — Proclamation of Iturbide. — The Regency. — Popular Reaction. — Congress. — Spain Refuses to Ratify the Treaty of Córdoba. — Iturbide's Election to the Throne. — The Coronation of Agustín I. — Extent of his Empire. — Difficulties Encountered. — Plan de Casa Mata. — Abdication of the Emperor. — Poder Ejecutivo. — Iturbide's Valedictory and Exile. — His subsequent Career. — His Return to Mexico. — Arrest and Execution. — His Sepulchre. — The Republic Formed. — The Monroe Doctrine and its Effects.

ITURBIDE met the Viceroy at Córdoba on his way to the capital and the result of their interview was the famous Treaty of Córdoba, embodying the principal points of the Plan de Iguala. By this treaty signed by O'Donoghue on behalf of the Spanish government, Mexico was declared sovereign and independent; a constitutional representative monarchy was created; and Ferdinand VII. was called to be king. To await his arrival in the country and prepare for that event, a

provisional government was organized consisting of Antonio Joaquín Pérez, Bishop of Puebla, and two associates, Juan José Espinosa de los Monteros and José Rafael Suárez Pereda. Many conferences were held and letters were exchanged in which the precise form of government to be adopted was discussed and attempts were made to harmonize the various views held by the different Independent leaders. What are known as "*las Tres Garantías*," by which the attempt has been made to summarize the movement of Iturbide and his adherents, were adopted. The empire was to guarantee to the Mexican people the Roman Catholic religion without toleration of any other; the absolute independence of the country; and the equal rights of the native races and the residents of European descent, or creoles. It is to these three guarantees, "religion, independence, and union," that the three colors of the Mexican flag, red, white, and green, adopted shortly afterwards, owe their origin.

The army of the Independents, numbering sixteen thousand men and headed by Iturbide, entered the capital on the 27th of September, 1821. Iturbide was hailed on all sides as the "Liberator" and a general jubi-

lee attended the close of the war and the establishment of an Independent government. In the street of San Francisco a triumphal arch was erected. Under it the representatives of the city government met Iturbide as he advanced toward the palace and cathedral, and tendered to him the golden keys of the city. Iturbide returned them with a characteristic speech, saying that the gates of the city should be closed only against irreligion, disunion, and despotism, and that the keys were returned to their rightful custodians, in the belief that they would seek only the good of the citizens whom they represented. At the palace the "Liberator" was formally received by O'Donoju and conducted to the cathedral, where *Te Deum* was sung.

In a proclamation to the Mexicans Iturbide took to himself the credit of having secured the Independence of Mexico by means of a bloodless revolution, thereby claiming superiority over the great leaders who had preceded him and really prepared the way for him. In the temporary organization of the provisional government, taking place the day after the triumphant entry of the Independent army, the members of the governing board

took an oath to support the Plan de Iguala and the Treaty of Córdoba.

A regency was forthwith appointed. It consisted of Agustin de Iturbide as president, Juan O'Donoju, Manuel de la Barcena, Isidro Yañez, and Manuel Velasquez de Leon. O'Donoju died on the 8th of October, and Antonio Joaquin Perez, Bishop of Puebla, was appointed a regent in his stead. Iturbide, that he might not fail to show his loyalty to the Church, which was such a powerful factor in the Plan de Iguala, conferred the honorary presidency of the regency upon the Bishop of Puebla, while he assumed the command of the army.

After the enthusiasm with which Iturbide had been popularly greeted upon his entry into Mexico had subsided, and the people had taken time to think, it was seen that Iturbide's plans were not wholly in accord with the views of the more thoughtful of the Mexicans. The people had suffered too much from the Church and its intimate relations to the Spanish government to allow it so much power in the new order of things, and Iturbide was openly committed to the Church. Suspicions arose as to the motives of the "Liberator," and his disinterestedness was

largely discredited. A reaction was natural. Advocates of a republic came forward and developed strength. The Iturbidistas, the partisans of Iturbide, had control of the army and wielded the powerful influence of the clergy. The first Congress of the Mexican nation convened on the 24th of February, 1822, — the first anniversary of the publication of the Plan de Iguala. Its meetings were noisy. Between it and the regency disagreements arose.

As might have been expected, and as was undoubtedly anticipated by Iturbide, Spain totally refused to ratify the Treaty of Córdoba, and denied the right of O'Donoju to sign it. And when notice of this refusal reached Mexico, Iturbide was provided with the opportunity to gratify his vaulting ambition. Among his adherents were the army, the clergy, and a few of the Spaniards. He first secured a demonstration in his favor by the army. Pio Marcha, a sergeant in the regiment of Celaya, was the distinguished instrument of this act. It occurred in the *cuartel* at San Hipolito on the 18th of May, 1822. Other *cuartels* took up the cry, and it was repeated on the streets and finally announced by salvos of artillery. Then in a

turbulent session of Congress Agustin de Iturbide was elected Emperor of Mexico (May 19, 1822). If we may believe his own account, his election was greeted with unrestrained enthusiasm, and the air was rent with shouts of "*Viva el Emperador! Viva Agustin de Iturbide!*"

He took the oath of office before the Congress at once, and began without delay to arrange for the succession to the throne, to provide titles for the various members of the Imperial family and other minor accessories of the empire, as well as to organize the government. On the 21st of June, 1822, he was anointed and crowned in the great cathedral at the capital, assuming the title Agustin I., Emperor. He made the building erected by the Marquesa de San Mateo Valparaiso, in the first Calle de San Francisco (now known as the Hotel Iturbide) his residence.

The reign of Agustin I. was brief and full of trouble. He was ruler of an empire only less in extent than Russia and China, and had reached the height of his ambition, but he soon experienced the uneasiness of the head that wears a crown, especially a crown that has not been carefully "shaped" to the wearer's head. He tried to strengthen the

party upon whose support he principally relied, by the creation of orders of nobility and appointing to them those whom he considered likely to be influenced by such flattery. He tried to destroy the opposition to him (composed of the old revolutionary leaders, for the most part, who wished either to have the Plan de Iguala explicitly executed or else the adoption of a Republic) by the imprisonment of some of the members of Congress who most freely expressed themselves regarding him. But all this was to no purpose. It was not for the personal aggrandizement of Iturbide that such valuable lives as those of Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama, Morelos, Matamoras, and hundreds of other patriots had been sacrificed, and blood had been spilt by others in the great struggle that had just closed. The survivors of that struggle determined that they would not permit him to reap all the benefits of the independence. They decided to assist in the plans of those who labored for the establishment of a republic. When in December, 1822, the opposition to the empire had grown to such proportions that it became an open rebellion, headed by General Santa Anna, and assumed the definite shape of the *Plan de Casa Mata*,

and was actively supported by such revolutionary chiefs as Bravo and Guerrero, Iturbide was without the means of suppressing the outbreak, and suddenly became aware that his popularity had subsided. He had been for a while the idol of the people; he was now made to feel that he was their enemy, and that there was no way open for him but to abdicate. His empire was reduced in extent to the City of Mexico. He recalled Congress after having dismissed it because it was beyond his control, and on the 20th of March, 1823, tendered his resignation. But Congress promptly refused to accept it on the ground that it had never voluntarily elected him Emperor. But it just as promptly ignored him altogether and formed a provisional government, called the Poder Ejecutivo ("Executive Power"), composed of four revolutionary chiefs, Nicolas Bravo, Guadalupe Victoria, General Negrete, and Vicente Guerrero. The Poder Ejecutivo, in recognition of the valuable services rendered to the country by Iturbide, granted him an annual pension of \$25,000 on condition of his fixing his residence in Italy. The Plan de Iguala and the Treaty of Córdoba were declared insufficient bases of government, and were abrogated as

standing in the way of the free exercise of the power of the Mexicans to establish a republic.

Iturbide in leaving the capital published a valedictory proclamation to Congress, attempting to explain his conduct and expressing his hopes that the Mexicans might be happy under the proposed new form of government. After some delay he embarked in May, 1823, with his family at Vera Cruz in an English vessel and took up his residence in Italy.

Thus ended the first Mexican empire. The fate of the ambitious Iturbide, whose previous career had been so brilliant, was sad indeed. From his home in Italy he closely watched Mexican affairs. There was still left in Mexico a party favorable to the re-establishment of an empire. There were many who were warmly attached to the ex-Emperor, personally; for with all his egotism and selfish ambition he appears to have had a large amount of personal magnetism. With these partisans and friends he was in constant correspondence. But he was misled as to the strength of the monarchical party and as to the true trend of political events at his old home. That the government succeeding his was un-

stable he was correctly informed, but that there was a tendency toward monarchy, or that the way was open for him to return to his abandoned throne and former popularity was untrue. Still he yielded to the reports and to his own inclinations, and leaving Italy took up his residence in London. Thence he sent warnings to the Mexican government of the scheme of the Holy Alliance to restore Spanish rule in Mexico and offered his services to his country. Believing that he had thus opened the way for his return he set out from Southampton, and on the 14th of July, 1824, he suddenly appeared with a part of his family in Soto la Marina. The Mexican commander of Tamaulipas invited him to land and then informed him that he had but a few hours to live; that Congress had passed a decree the previous April, upon receiving news, through his letter of warning, of his having left Italy, declaring him a traitor and pronouncing sentence of death upon him should he return to Mexico. In a special session the legislature of Tamaulipas discussed the advisability of carrying out this extraordinary sentence, and finally decreed that the execution of Iturbide should take place.

Five days after his landing he was taken

to Padilla, and executed in front of the church at that place. He met death with heroism, for though a weak sovereign he was a brave soldier. In his last words he disclaimed the treasonable designs imputed to him, and exhorted the Mexicans to observe their religion, maintain the peace, and obey the laws of their country. His remains were first buried in the old church at Padilla. In 1838 they were removed to the Cathedral in the city of Mexico and placed in the Chapel of San Felipe de Jesus in the west transept. Upon the sarcophagus enclosing his bones, he is called the "Liberator." Thus the Imperial title he had assumed was ignored, but the actual services rendered to his country were duly recognized.

Under the Poder Ejecutivo, Congress was reassembled, and a constitution was adopted establishing a republican form of government somewhat after the model of the United States. It was proclaimed October 4, 1824, and is known as the Constitution of 1824. It was an important factor in the subsequent war of Texan Independence. An election was duly held and with the inauguration of the first President of Mexico on the 10th of October, 1824, the *Poder Ejecutivo* ceased,

and the history of "*Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*," or "*La Republica Mexicana*" (its literary title), begins.

Contemporaneously, or nearly so, with the events narrated in the last two chapters the Spanish provinces in South America, — Venezuela, New Granada and Peru, — by a revolution headed by Simon Bolivar, threw off the yoke of Spain; and Guatemala, never a part of New Spain and only voluntarily united with the Mexican empire in 1822, severed its connection with Mexico, and set up a separate, independent republic. All the Spanish American countries were therefore the subject of the attention of the United States, and of the European powers. The United States had recognized the independence of Mexico in 1822, and were resolved to secure its recognition by the European nations. In the message of President Monroe to Congress in December, 1823, were declarations to the following effect: The American continents, by the free and independent condition they had assumed and maintained were no longer to be considered subjects for colonization by European powers; any attempt on the part of European powers to extend

their political systems to the Western Hemisphere would be considered dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States; any interposition by such powers to oppress or control the governments that had declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence had been acknowledged by the United States would be viewed as unfriendly to the United States; the political systems of Europe could not be extended to any portion of the American continents without endangering the peace and happiness of the United States, and such extension would not be regarded with indifference.

This is the famous "Monroe Doctrine" to which appeal is made whenever a conflict between European and American interests on this continent is threatened. It had its rise in the events already described, and within half a century after its promulgation an occasion arose in Mexico for the assertion of that portion of the doctrine relating to foreign intervention in the affairs of free governments established on this continent. The occasion will receive due attention when we come to examine the affairs of the country in the time of the Second Empire.

There seems to have been at no time a

perfect understanding on the part of the United States of the political condition of Mexico, but the older republic could be relied upon to sympathize with a country having, by whatever means, secured its independence, and without examining too closely into the character of the government. It was no less ready to recognize the Mexican republic than it had been to recognize the empire. The declaration contained in the message of President Monroe was especially gratifying to England, whose minister of foreign affairs had long been urging upon the United States the necessity of promulgating some such doctrine. The news of it, when received in Europe, was doubtless effectual in preventing Spain from making, at the time, any further effort to reclaim her revolted provinces in America.