

## CHAPTER X.

### STILL MORE PRESIDENTS, ANTI-PRESIDENTS, AND THE WAR OF "THE REFORM."

Second Administration of Herrera. — Mariano Arista. — Juan Bautista Ceballos. — Manuel Maria Lombardini. — Santa Anna Declares Himself Perpetual Dictator. — Revolutions on the Pacific Coast. — Santa Anna's Flight from the Capital. — His subsequent Career and Death. — Anarchy at the Capital. — Romulo Diaz de la Vega Restores Order. — Martin Carrera. — Plan de Ayotla Successful. — Juan Alvarez and Ignacio Comonfort. — Revolution in Puebla. — War between Church and State. — Suppression of Monastery of San Francisco. — Constitution of 1857. — Golpe de Estado. — Zuloaga's Rebellion. — Comonfort's Exile. — Plan de Navidad. — The Succession of Anti-presidents. — Benito Juarez Comes into Power. — The War of the Reform. — Career of Juarez. — Difficulties in Establishing his Government. — Nationalization of Church Property. — Execution of the Decree. — Monuments of the Reform Period.

THE fondness for revolution inherent in the Mexican people was scarcely indulged during the second administration of Herrera, and the government succeeded in permanently quieting General Paredes, who was defeated in Guanajuato in July, 1848. Herrera's administration was wise, economical, tolerant, and moral, and lasted until the beginning of the year 1851. And it was furthermore unique in this respect: for the

first time in the history of the republic, the government passed from the hands of one president to those of another — both constitutionally elected — without violence. The election of 1850 resulted in the choice of Gen. Mariano Arista (who had been Minister of War under Herrera) as president, and he was legally and peaceably installed on the 15th of January, 1851. He was the most industrious and economical of all the presidents, pursuing the reform policy of his predecessor.

But the spirit of revolution, already suppressed longer than usual, broke out again in less than two years after Arista had taken his seat. There were pronunciamientos in Guadalajara, in Mazatlan, in Culiacan, and (most formidable of them all) in Orizaba. Arista would not dissolve Congress, and was disinclined to involve the country in another bloody civil war. So he resigned the Presidency and secretly retired to his hacienda (January 6, 1853). He subsequently left for Europe, and died in Lisbon. It is mentioned, as proof of the honesty of his public life, that he died a bankrupt. The statement is a reflection upon other public officers in Mexico.

He was succeeded by Don Juan Bautista Ceballos, the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, who took the oath of office on the 5th of January, and subsequently received an official appointment to the office from Congress. Revolution broke out in Jalisco, and spread to other States. Congress was dissolved by Ceballos, but it reassembled in the house of one of the deputies, and appointed in the place of Ceballos a Mexican merchant named Don Juan Muciga y Osorio. He refused to accept the troublesome gift of the presidency of Mexico while revolution was rife in the land. The Liberals thereupon, with the object of bringing Santa Anna again into power, secured a demonstration by the army in favor of Gen. Manuel Maria Lombardini, in whose hands Santa Anna had left the command of the army upon his flight from Mexico after the capture of Churubusco. Santa Anna was supposed to be in South America at the time. Lombardini procured his election by the States, and on the 15th of April, 1853, Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna entered Guadalupe-Hidalgo as the President of Mexico, having thus reached that exalted office for the sixth time. He organized his govern-

ment, giving to Don Lucas Alaman the premiership. Five days later he entered the capital and began his administration.

It was expected on all sides that Santa Anna would restore peace and order to the republic. The Mexicans were not fully acquainted with the man, notwithstanding their long experience with him and their frequent opportunities for studying his character. He began to strengthen his position by increasing the army and dispensing patronage with a lavish hand. At the same time his government became despotic in the extreme, and he showed no tolerance whatever toward the opponents of his party. So intolerable was his conduct that Alaman promptly resigned. Santa Anna, supposing that the time had arrived for him to secure for himself the presidency for life, issued a decree on the 16th of December, 1853, declaring himself Perpetual Dictator.

Opposition naturally sprang up in every direction. In March, 1854, rebellion broke out in Ayotla and in Acapulco. Gen. Juan Alvarez and Gen. Ignacio Comonfort were the insurgent leaders in Acapulco. Santa Anna set out against them at the head of four thousand men, and war raged along the

western coast of Mexico until July, 1855, when Santa Anna returned to the capital.

Added to this internecine turbulence, Sonora was subjected to an invasion of about three hundred French filibusters under the Count Raousset de Boulvon, who proposed to conquer that State and establish a kingdom there. The enterprise came to grief, and the Count was apprehended and put to death.

Upon his return from the pursuit of the insurgents of the Pacific coast, Santa Anna tried to restore quiet in the capital by the removal of the Conservative members of his cabinet and the appointment of Liberals in their places. But this intended conciliatory action was taken too late, and he finally gave up the governmental experiment as hopeless. At three o'clock in the morning of the 9th of August, 1855, he secretly left the capital, and three days later embarked at Vera Cruz for Cuba.

Thus ended the political career of General Santa Anna. He resided for a while in the West Indies, and then sought a home in the United States. He made overtures in 1863 to the second empire, but failing to inspire confidence in his integrity, he was again

exiled. After the fall of the second empire he planned an expedition against the government of Juarez, but was captured in an attempt to land at Vera Cruz, and was sentenced to be shot. His sentence was, through the leniency of Juarez, commuted to exile. For some time he resided on Staten Island, New York. He returned to Mexico under a general amnesty after the death of Juarez, and died there in obscurity in 1876. The tomb of this able and courageous general, but restless, ambitious, unscrupulous political schemer, may be seen in the *Panteon de Tepeyacac*, on the hill in Guadalupe-Hidalgo, and his portrait hangs in the National Museum in the city of Mexico.

Upon the flight of Santa Anna, anarchy was imminent in the capital. The most prominent promoters of the revolution assembled quickly, and elected Gen. Romulo Diaz de la Vega acting-president, and he succeeded in establishing order, but not before the people had sacked the house of Santa Anna and burned his coach and furniture, and paid their respects in like manner to the houses of his ministers. By a representative assembly Gen. Martin Carrera was elected acting-president, and he was installed

on the 15th of August, 1855, but resigned on the 11th of the following month, when the presidency devolved a second time upon Gen. Romulo Diaz de la Vega.

The revolution of Alvarez and Comonfort, known as the Plan de Ayotla, was entirely successful, and under the wise and just administration of Diaz de la Vega, the country was brought to the wholly abnormal state of quiet and order. Representatives of the triumphant party assembled in Cuernavaca and elected Gen. Juan Alvarez, president *ad interim*, and upon the formation of his cabinet he named Comonfort his Minister of War. Returning to the capital, he transferred the presidency to his Minister of War, and on the 12th of December, 1855, Gen. Ignacio Comonfort entered upon the discharge of his duties as acting-president. He was made actual president by a large majority in the popular election held two years later, and was reinstalled on the 1st of December, 1857. He proved to be one of the most remarkable rulers of Mexico, and his administration marks the beginning of a new era in Mexican history.

Scarcely had Comonfort begun his rule as the substitute of Alvarez, when revolutions

again broke out and assumed formidable proportions. Puebla was occupied by 5,000 insurgents. Federal troops sent against them joined their cause. Comonfort succeeded in raising an army of 16,000 men, well equipped, and at its head marched to Puebla and suppressed the revolution before the end of March. But in October another rebellion broke out in Puebla, headed by Col. Miguel Miramon. The government succeeded in suppressing this, as well as one which broke out in San Luis Potosi, and another, under the leadership of Gen. Tomas Mejia, in Queretaro.

It was by Comonfort that the war between the Church and the government, so long threatened, was precipitated. In June, 1856, he issued a decree ordering the sale of all the unimproved real estate held by the Church, at its assessed value. The Church was to receive the proceeds, but the land was to become thereby freed from all ecclesiastical control, and become a part of the available wealth of the country, to be taken into private hands. In September, 1856, he received information that certain ecclesiastics, having their headquarters in the monastery of San Francisco, in the city of Mexico, were con-

spiriting against his government. He at once ordered the Federal troops to take possession of the monastery and arrest all the inmates. He ordered the opening of the street now known as "Independencia" through the property, and finally suppressed the monastery and confiscated its property. The decree of suppression was recalled on the 19th of February, 1857, but the attitude of the Church to the government has continued to be inimical until the present time. The Church party, unable to prevent these aggressions on the part of the government at the time, subsequently gathered strength by uniting with other malcontents, and was able eventually to overthrow Comonfort and set up a rival government, to be in its turn overthrown by his successor, Juarez, and to submit to further aggression.

On the 5th of February, 1857, the present Constitution of Mexico was adopted by Congress. Comonfort, as Provisional President, subscribed it, and it was under its provisions that he was elected actual president. But ten days after his inauguration in December, 1857, and his taking the oath to support the new Constitution, the President, supposing that he could gain the full support of the

Liberals, and claiming that he had found the operation of the Constitution impracticable, dissolved Congress and set the Constitution aside. He threw his legal successor, Benito Juarez, the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, and one of the supporters of the new Constitution, into prison. Juarez was likewise the promoter of Comonfort's measures against the Church, but his imprisonment failed to conciliate the Church party. It was for some such act of despotism as the *golpe de estado*, the setting aside of the Constitution, "the blow to the State," that the sympathizers with the Church were watching, and they took advantage of it at once. The almost immediate result was the rebellion in Tacubaya of Gen. Felix Zuloaga and his entire brigade. At once the country was divided between the adherents of Comonfort and the "reactionaries" (reacting from Comonfort's strained efforts at reform) and Church sympathizers. The latter gained in strength daily. Comonfort discovered too late the mistake he had made, restored the Constitution, and liberated Juarez, but without the desired effect. He organized the National Guard and tried to put down the rebellion. But Zuloaga, having received the support of

Miramón and others, gained possession of the capital. On the 21st of January, 1858, Comonfort left for Vera Cruz, where he took passage for the United States, and afterward sailed for Europe.

The capital thus left in the hands of the reactionaries, a *junta de notables* was assembled, by whom Gen. Felix Zuloaga was elected acting-president, and took possession of his shadowy office on the 22d of January, 1858. But though energetic in his military operations, he daily lost favor in the capital, even with his own party, and in December a conspiracy was formed in Ayotla, known as the *Plan de Navidad*, because proclaimed on Christmas day. By this plan Zuloaga was deposed and forced to seek refuge in the house of the British ambassador, and Gen. Manuel Robles Pezuela was put in his place. He pursued a conciliatory policy until he was replaced by Don José Ignacio Pavón, who assumed the presidential office by reason of his position as president of the Tribunal of Justice. He assembled another *Junta de Notables*, which elected Gen. Miguel Miramón, acting-president. Miramón was at the head of the reactionary army in the interior of the coun-

try at the time, but returned to the capital, and much to the chagrin of the *junta* by whom he had been elected, turned the office over to Gen. Felix Zuloaga, who on his part conferred enlarged powers and privileges on Miramón. After an unsuccessful campaign against Vera Cruz, which was stoutly defended by the enemies of the reactionaries, Miramón returned to the capital, and the *junta* again set Zuloaga aside, and placed Gen. Miguel Miramón upon the presidential throne; and he exercised the privileges belonging to that office until his defeat at Calpulalpam in December, 1860. He then abandoned the capital and left the country. Gen. Jesus González Ortega, by virtue of his office as commander of the Federal army, assumed charge of the government until the tangled maze of Mexican politics was sufficiently straightened out to permit the return to the capital of the rightful ruler.

Constitutionally (if we may ever use that word seriously in connection with Mexican affairs), upon the abandonment of the presidency by Comonfort, the office devolved upon the President of the Supreme Court of Justice. That office was held at the time

by Don Benito Juarez, who thereupon became president *de jure* of Mexico; and as his cause triumphed in the end over all its enemies, we may discriminate between the two separate lines of the Presidential succession to the extent of regarding the line including Zuloaga, Pezuela, Pavon, and Miramon, as the illegitimate line, and those men as anti-presidents; and Juarez as representing the direct and legitimate succession, and as the Constitutional President. But the most curious specimen of the nomenclature adopted in Mexican history is that which gives to the struggle between the Church party and its allies, and the Constitutional government, the name of the War of the Reform, and has made "*La Reforma*" such a favorite appellation. What was thereby reformed it would be difficult to say. If to oppress and rob be to reform, then the Church in Mexico was in process of reformation in those times. But further than the suppression of the outreaching power, wealth, and influence of the Church, and the assertion of the supremacy of the State, no evidences of reform are exhibited in the much vaunted "Reform" period of Mexican history. The Constitutional reforms which took place at

that time, and are yearly celebrated in the city of Mexico on the 5th of February, produced no other nor more beneficial result than that.

But the "War of the Reform" had all the bitterness of a religious war, and was the most sanguinary of all the civil wars in which Mexico had been engaged. The parties engaged in it represented all the factions of the previous periods. Conservatives, clericals, reactionaries, monarchists, were the names applied in the years 1859 and 1860 to what had previously been known as *Yorkinos*, high Liberals, Federalists, and Iturbidistas, and the cause on whose side Santa Anna was always found, whatever might be its name. The Liberalists and Progressionists, represented as far as was possible the *Escoceses*, the moderate Liberals, and the Centralists.

Unquestionably, Juarez, who is thus made to appear as a reformer, was the most remarkable man Mexico has ever produced. He was born in 1806 in the mountains of Oaxaca, in a poor little hamlet now bearing his name, but then known as San Pablo. He belonged to the Zapoteca tribe of Indians. Not a drop of Spanish blood flowed in his veins. Until he was twelve years of age

he spoke only the Indian dialect in use in his native village, and could neither read nor write. Then being given a start in life he was educated for the bar in the city of Oaxaca, rising rapidly both in his profession and in the politics of his country. He experienced all the vicissitudes of political life in Mexico, including arrest, imprisonment, sentence of death, escape, exile, amnesty; and he held the offices of legislator, judge, senator, governor, and cabinet-minister, before he became by popular election in 1857 president of the Supreme Court of Justice in the government of Comonfort, and in the line of the succession to the presidency in case of a vacancy. Very early in his political career he had evinced a hostile feeling toward the Church within whose pale he had been born and reared and whose ministry he was once on the point of entering. He was the dictator of Comonfort's vigorous measures against the Church.

Upon the flight of Comonfort, Juarez was utterly without support or means to establish his government. Being driven out of the capital by Zuloaga he went to Guadalajara, and then by way of the Pacific coast, Panama, and New Orleans, to Vera Cruz. There

he succeeded in setting up the Constitutional government, supporting it out of the customs duties collected at the ports of entry on the Gulf coast. It was war to the knife between the President in Vera Cruz and the Anti-Presidents in the capital, and blood flowed freely upon the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre.

On the 12th of July, 1859, Juarez made a long stride in advance of Comonfort by issuing his famous decree, "nationalizing" — that is, sequestrating, or more properly, confiscating — the property of the Church. It was enforced in Vera Cruz at once. A tall church-tower there, now used as a lighthouse, and bearing the name of Juarez, is a fit monument to the famous decree of sequestration. The armies of the two rival governments met in conflict on many occasions. It was at Calpulalpam, in a battle lasting from the 21st to the 24th of December, 1860, that Miramon was defeated and forced to leave the country. General Ortega, in command of the forces of Juarez, advanced to the capital and held it for the return of his chief.

When the army of Juarez entered the capital on the 27th of December, the decree of sequestration began to be executed there



with brutal severity. It was principally from the wealth of the Church that the rival government had derived its support. Not only would the Juarez government cause it to disgorge for the benefit of the triumphant administration, but it would punish its crime in harboring the enemy. Monasteries were closed forthwith, and the members of the various religious orders were expelled the country. Within a few weeks the work of demolition began. Jewels and pictures were seized, the latter going to San Carlos Academy. Bells were taken from the towers and sent to the ordnance foundry. Buildings were sold, and many of them dismantled. Streets were opened through some of the Church property and some handsome edifices were left to decay.

It is said that from the "nationalized" church property the government secured \$20,000,000, without, as subsequent events showed, deriving any permanent benefit from it. It helped to precipitate another war, in which it was all dissipated, and the country was poorer than ever. The face of the capital was at once greatly changed, and if the tourist now seeks a monument perpetuating the glorious Reform let him not seek it in the

*Paseo de la Reforma*, which commemorates it only in name. He may in imagination see the name "Reform" mockingly written upon many buildings now devoted to secular, even in some cases to base uses, whose fronts exhibit sculptured crosses, sacred monograms, and other designs marking them as once the property of the Church. These are the monuments of the so-called Reform decree, and of the fury with which it broke upon the beautiful capital whose pride it was once to call itself a "city of Churches and Palaces."

was to be appropriated, nor was the right of the Mexicans to arrange their own form of government to be interfered with. Without waiting to learn the views of the United States government, to whom a copy of this treaty was sent with an invitation to join the expedition, the requisite forces were equipped and sent forward to Mexico, arrived off Vera Cruz in December, 1861, and landing, took possession of that city. The allied army consisted of six thousand Spanish, and twenty-five hundred French soldiers, and seven hundred English marines, all under the command of the Spanish marshal, Prim.

The Juarez government, apprised in advance of what was about to take place, exerted itself to the utmost to oppose the threatened invasion. Appeals were made to Mexicans to lay aside their personal feuds and unite against the common foe. The army was reorganized and increased, and money was raised for extraordinary defensive measures. And with the object more particularly of suppressing the monarchical party that had long been in existence, and was known to be in sympathy with the French invaders, Juarez issued a decree, in January, 1862, declaring that all Mexicans between the ages of sixteen

and sixty, who did not take up arms in defence of the republic were traitors; that any armed invasion of the country without a previous declaration of war, or any invitation of such an invasion by Mexicans or foreign residents of Mexico, was a crime against the independence of the country, and was punishable with death. Extraordinary powers over the persons and properties of the citizens were given to civil officers, and courts-martial were established in the place of the ordinary tribunals of justice. The severest terms of this decree were speedily visited upon a Mexican officer of high standing. He was arrested on his way to the French camp and executed. But the result of this action of Juarez was the reverse of what had been intended; and the ranks of the monarchical party were reinforced from among those who had formerly been indifferent.

To avoid war, if it were possible, Juarez first resorted to diplomacy, and a meeting of commissioners representing Mexico and the three foreign nations was arranged to take place at Orizaba in April. But in a preliminary convention held in Soledad, near Vera Cruz, in February, the true objects of France came to light, and England and Spain with-

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