

The place was attacked, and carried. The unfortunate Spaniards, and all who adhered to them, were sacrificed by the infuriated Indians. In vain Hidalgo interposed, to prevent the slaughter: he now saw, when too late, that revenge was the predominant feeling among his Indians, and that nothing would satisfy them but the extermination of the Gachupins. The treasures which fell into the hands of the conquerors would appear incredible to the reader, if he did not consider, that we have reference to a city surrounded by the richest mines in the known world. The sacking of the city continued for three days; and the plunderers were loaded with doubloons, dollars, and ingots of gold and silver. The precious metals were found in some private houses, as well as in the public buildings, piled in vast heaps. The Indians were occupied several days in carrying off these treasures; and it was supposed that each man took away at least five hundred dollars, and the greater proportion several thousands. The Indians, afterwards, offered their doubloons for sale at four reals each, conceiving that they were only gilt medals.*

* The people, of all classes, wear medals suspended from the neck, bearing the impression of some favourite

Hidalgo had now such an overflowing treasury, that he paid his soldiers a dollar a day each; and as to his officers, he allowed them to help themselves to whatever amount they liked.

From the preceding relation it may be inferred, that Hidalgo was highly culpable, in permitting the perpetration of those deeds of rapine and murder. We have before stated, that his private character was unblemished; but, in the novel situation in which he found himself placed, it was not extraordinary that he should permit the Indians to enjoy the first-fruits of their exertions. He considered it politic to let them have palpable proofs that they would profit by the revolution; and, with regard to the slaughter of the Spaniards, it was impossible for him to prevent it. Still it is a fact, that there are now a great number of European Spaniards and Creoles living in Mexico, who were protected and saved from death by the humanity of Hidal-

saint, but generally of the Virgin of Guadalupe: some of them are of silver, others merely gilt; and as, in shape and appearance, the latter resemble a doubloon, the poor Indians knew not the difference. Nothing can more strongly elucidate the wretched ignorance and poverty of the great mass of Indians, than this anecdote. A real, of Mexican currency, is the eighth of a dollar.

go; and, in many instances, most ungratefully did they requite his clemency. They proved themselves, subsequently, the most cruel and implacable enemies of the patriots, and particularly of the insurgent Indians, who fell into their hands. These were massacred, in the most wanton manner, by the very prisoners whose lives Hidalgo had formerly saved.

After the capture of Guanaxuato, Hidalgo found his forces augmenting so fast, that he determined to advance on the city of Mexico. He proceeded, taking the route of Valladolid, gathering an hourly accession of Indians, and some few royalist deserters.

The revolt had by this time spread with electric rapidity over a great part of the kingdom. Even in the city of Mexico, Puebla de los Angeles, and in other places, the Spanish authorities were trembling for their safety. It was a critical moment for the Spaniards; their government was upon the very point of being overthrown, and their persons sacrificed. The forces of the government were entirely Creole; and if any conspicuous officer, either in the cities of Mexico or Puebla, had then declared in favour of Hidalgo, the revolution would have succeeded.

The Creoles beheld, with alarm, their fate de-

pending on an ignorant and infuriated body of Indians, and were compelled to rally round the existing authorities, as the only means of personal safety. Very different would have been their feelings and conduct, if the revolution had broken out as it was *originally planned, amongst the wealthy and leading Creoles of the principal cities*: but, as the plot had been prematurely frustrated, and the rebellion had commenced with the Indians, from whom all classes of whites had as much to fear as the Spaniards, and as the career of Hidalgo and his party was marked by horrid excesses, it became the policy, indeed the imperious interest, of the Creoles, to adhere to the viceroy. Still, however, there were daily desertions from the royalists, and the forces of Hidalgo were assuming a formidable aspect. He had already marched eighty leagues without opposition, and was approaching the gates of the city, with at least one hundred and ten thousand men. It is true, that, amongst this vast multitude, there were not more than *a thousand musquets*; but every heart was animated with a lofty spirit, and was full of ardour. Had they been well directed, or been subject to any species of order, they might, even with clubs and slings, have committed great havoc among their opponents.

The viceroy Venegas prepared to resist the storm with great firmness, and had previously taken prompt and strong measures to throw Hidalgo and his party into confusion. He issued proclamations, breathing death and extermination against the rebels. He decreed, that all persons who should be taken with arms in their hands, should be shot, whether they were of the clergy or not, or in whatever numbers; and he allowed only fifteen minutes for each criminal to prepare for eternity. At the same time, he offered his majesty's pardon to all who should return to their allegiance. The church likewise hurled its thunders with an unsparing hand. The archbishop of Mexico, in the fulness of his holy zeal, declared all the insurgents to be *heretics*. He excommunicated them in a body, with all the ceremony and rigour of papal anathemas; and painted, in vivid colours, the enormity of their crime, in having taken up arms against a monarch, on whose head the sacred unction had been poured. He ordered all the Spanish clergy, and their faithful Creoles, to represent from the pulpit, and to circulate reports, that the great object of the revolutionists was to subvert and destroy the holy catholic religion; and he directed the subaltern clergy to sow discord and uneasiness

among families, by means of the confessional chair. In short, no exertions were spared by the archbishop to alarm the credulous, and to agitate the minds of the Mexican people; and there is no doubt, that his fulminations had a powerful tendency to paralyze the operations of the revolutionists.

On the approach of Hidalgo to the city of Mexico, the viceroy displayed great activity and presence of mind. He barricaded the streets, and adopted every manner of defence of which the city was susceptible: all the arms that could be procured were distributed among the citizens of the capital; and he pointed out to them the dreadful consequences that would ensue, in case they permitted Hidalgo and his party to enter into the city.

A detachment of troops was despatched from the city, under the command of Truxillo, to check the advance of Hidalgo. He took post in a narrow defile of the mountains, at a place called Las Cruces, about eight leagues from the capital, where he awaited the insurgents. An action took place; but the overwhelming force of Hidalgo compelled him to abandon his position, and retreat upon the city, where he arrived, with the loss of his artillery, and a number of his troops. This disaster spread a gloom over

the royalists; but the viceroy persevered in placing the city in a state of defence, and endeavoured, by his presence, to animate the people.

In the account that Truxillo gave of the affair at Las Cruces, a stranger would suppose that he had defended the defile with the obstinacy of a Leonidas; but it appears there was a part of the Spartan hero's conduct, which Truxillo and some other Spanish officers did not think expedient to imitate. He boasts, in his despatch, that such were his loyal feelings and indignation, that he had *fired upon the bearers of a flag of truce, which Hidalgo had sent to him.*

After the action of Las Cruces, Hidalgo advanced to the Hacienda of *Quaximalpa*, only five leagues distant from the city of Mexico. Hidalgo and his army were now in full view of the capital of that kingdom, the overthrow of whose government they had resolved to effect. A bold and enterprising man would have decided the fate of the empire in less than twenty-four hours. He would have calculated, that, although his forces were undisciplined, yet they were brave and enthusiastic; and such was their great numerical superiority, that a comparatively trifling sacrifice of lives would have insured success to the attempt.

Unfortunately, Hidalgo possessed, in his character, none of the requisites essential for that critical moment. He paused, at the instant when activity and energy should have marked all his actions, and, instead of advancing directly to the assault, sent a summons to the viceroy to surrender the city. To this demand no answer was returned; and Venegas contrived, by emissaries, to impress Hidalgo with the opinion, that the preparations for defence had rendered the city almost impregnable, to a disordered multitude, without fire-arms. Hidalgo ought, however, to have considered, that the city contained about thirty thousand people of the same description as his army, upon whose disaffection to the royalists he could have relied, and that the whole armed force did not exceed ten thousand men, a body by no means sufficient to guard the extensive lines of that vast city. Had he attacked it at different points, with divisions of twenty or thirty thousand men, there would have been, at least, a chance of his succeeding; while the loss of the opportunity he then had of striking a decisive blow, would encourage the enemy, and enable them to strengthen their defence, and even to act on the offensive. None of these reflections appear to have occurred to Hidalgo. On the contrary, he was struck with

a panic, and, resolving to abandon the project of attacking the city, commenced a retreat, after remaining two or three days in sight of Mexico.

The viceroy had early despatched Don *Felix Maria Calleja* to concentrate the royal forces, and he was actually on his march to the relief of the city, with a well appointed Creole army of ten thousand men, and a train of artillery, at the very time when Hidalgo retreated from before Mexico. Venegas, eased of his apprehensions for the capital, ordered Calleja to attack Hidalgo.

The two armies met at Aculco, where an obstinate and bloody battle was fought. The Indians evinced a degree of valour entirely unexpected on the part of the royalists. They rushed with their clubs on the bayonets of the columns of the enemy, and fell in heaps. They were so totally ignorant of the effects of artillery, that, in the height of their enthusiasm, they fearlessly ran up to the cannon, and with their *sombreros de petate* (flag hats) endeavoured to stop up the muzzles of the guns. A scene ensued that baffles description. Without order, and under no command, each one acted for himself, and confusion was spread in every direction through the army of Hidalgo. At

length, the discipline of the royal troops prevailed; they took advantage of the disorder of the Indians, put them to the rout, and commenced a slaughter which ceased only when the Spaniards had become satiated with the work of death. Calleja, in his despatches, exults that the insurgents lost ten thousand men, of whom five thousand were deliberately put to the sword.

After this disastrous battle, Hidalgo retreated on Guanaxuato; whence he fell back upon *Guadalajara*, leaving the rear-guard under Allende in the former place.

Calleja, flushed with the victory he had recently gained, resolved to follow it up, and accordingly advanced on Guanaxuato. Allende gave him battle at the Hacienda of *Marfil*, about a league from the city. The patriots, in this action, were not in a situation to cope with Calleja, but they defended themselves with great obstinacy. They were defeated; and Allende, with the remains of his troops, rejoined Hidalgo.

Calleja now entered the city of Guanaxuato as a conqueror, and there exhibited his vindictive and cruel disposition without restraint. Rendered furious by the timely retreat of Hidalgo, and at the conduct which the inhabitants of that city had displayed in favour of the

rebellion, he determined to make an example so dreadful, as should strike terror into the revolted provinces.

The sacrifice of the prisoners taken at the battle of Marfil was not sufficient to satiate his vindictive spirit. He glutted his vengeance on the defenceless populace of Guanaxuato. Men, women, and children, were driven, by his orders, into the great square; and several thousands (it is said fourteen) of these poor wretches, were butchered in the most barbarous manner. Their throats were cut; the principal fountain of the city was literally overflowing with blood, and, far from concealing these savage acts, Calleja, in his despatches, exults in the honour of communicating to the viceroy the intelligence, that he had purged the city of its rebellious population. The only apology offered for this mode of sacrifice was, that it would have wasted too much powder and ball to have shot them, and that therefore, on a principle of economy, *their throats were cut.*

The tragic scenes of Guanaxuato were the commencement of a system of cruelty, which Calleja and his contemporaries exercised in almost every city, town, and village, through which they marched. His name, united with that of *Cruz, Concha, Yturvidi, Castañon, Ne-*

grete, and Liñan, will be transmitted to future ages with the bitter execrations of the Mexicans.

This monster soon received proofs from the Cadiz regency of their high satisfaction at his conduct. They appointed him to succeed Venegas in the viceregal power.

No sooner was he seated in the supreme chair of state, than terror spread throughout the empire. Murder, fire, and devastation, were dealt out with a merciless hand, and neither age, sex, nor condition, could repress the rage of this barbarian. These his qualifications appear to have met with warm admirers in Old Spain, where he was elevated to high honours. He was created *Count of Calderon*; and subsequently appointed to the command of the expedition formed at Cadiz for the subjugation of South America. Fortunately, that expedition has failed: and happy is it for the Americans that Calleja did not again pollute the soil of their country; for had he landed on it, his hands would again have been dyed in blood, and his ears again delighted with deep-breathed maledictions. But to resume the history—

Hidalgo's army, although it had sustained a loss of at least thirty thousand men, in killed,

prisoners, and deserters, was still about eighty thousand strong; and as some pains had been taken to reduce them to order, they were much better calculated to make a resistance than before.

The heavy guns from the works at San Blas had been conveyed to Guadalajara, and lines were thrown up, which at least bore the aspect of fortifications. Hidalgo felt more confident, and looked forward to his being able to make a firm stand at Guadalajara. He endeavoured to excite the spirits of his army by energetic and judicious harangues, and earnestly solicited the Indians not to commit the same errors that had occurred in the previous combats. Thus prepared, he awaited the approach of Calleja, who soon made his appearance before the city. The battle was fought at the pass of the *bridge of Calderon*. In the early part of the action, the patriots swept all before them; they rushed in among, and broke the royal columns. But confusion arising among the Indians, a desperate charge was made upon them by a regiment which Calleja had kept in reserve. A general rout ensued. The Indians, flying in all directions, were pursued, and massacred by thousands.

The most appalling scenes of cruelty were

renewed, the details of which are forborne, lest the heart of the reader should sicken at the picture of sanguinary horror. Suffice it to say, that every prisoner, who fell into the hands of the relentless Calleja, was murdered; and a tragedy similar to that which was performed at Guanajuato, was acted at Guadalajara, towards all persons on whom the least suspicion lighted of having supported the cause of Hidalgo.

The Spaniards, animated by these successes, issued orders to exterminate the inhabitants of every town and village that manifested symptoms of adherence to the rebels, and, from the pulpit, new fulminations were hurled against all who opposed the royal authority. The most ridiculous stories were circulated among the credulous and superstitious natives. Tracts were published by the clergy, stating that the recent victories had been obtained by the special intervention of the Deity, who had, during the late actions, exhibited in the clouds *crosses and palms*, in token of His protection to the royal cause. These tales were not without effect, particularly over those who had already become disheartened by discomfiture.

Hidalgo, with some of his chief officers, escaped, and took the road for the internal pro-

vinces.* It is said that he meant to attempt by that route an escape to the United States. He reached a place called *Acatila de Bajan*, near the Saltillo; where himself and his officers were treacherously delivered up by an officer named Bustamante, on the 25th of March. In this man Hidalgo had placed the greatest confidence, and he had previously been attached to his party. Hidalgo was taken to Chihuahua, in the intendancy of Durango, and there shot, on the 27th of July, 1811.

* The internal provinces form three divisions:—

1st. Those of the viceroyalty:—the province of San Luis Potosi; colony of New Santander; and new kingdom of Leon.

2d. Eastern internal provinces:—Cohahuila, and Texas.

3d. Western:—Durango, Sonora, New Mexico, and the Californias.

The eastern and western provinces are each commanded by a commandant-general.

The commandant-general of the eastern provinces commands, in a military point of view, those of New Santander, New Kingdom of Leon, Cohahuila, and Texas; but the finances of the two last only pass through his hands. Those of the other two, and of San Luis, are remitted direct to the treasury of Mexico, by the intendant of the intendancy of San Luis Potosi. The head-quarters of the eastern commandant-general are at Monterey.

The commandant-general of the western provinces commands, in every respect, Durango, Sonoro, New Mexico, and the Californias: his head-quarters are at Chihuahua.

It would appear, from accounts published in the Gazette of Mexico, that, a few hours before his death, he made a solemn recantation of his errors; and there is a long address, said to have been written by him, in which he unfolds to his countrymen the enormity of their crime, in taking up arms against their legitimate sovereign, and entreats them to return to their duty, &c. The friends of Hidalgo say, that all this is a royal forgery, and that he died supplicating Heaven to favour the struggles of his country for independence. But be this as it may, it is now well known, that such arts, on the part of the royalists, have been frequently employed, since the death of Hidalgo; for, scarcely a single patriot chief of note has been executed, whose penitence, and formal abjuration of the cause he had espoused, have not been published in the Mexican Gazette.

Allende, who was taken with Hidalgo, suffered death on the 20th of June, 1811: all the other officers were likewise executed about the same time.