

it was established in the Tierra Caliente of Valladolid, where the enemy were not quite so numerous as in the Baxio, and where, from the natural advantages of the country, it could occupy positions that would be secure, or at least favourable for escape, in the event of a surprise. Three of its members, either from disgust, or a conviction that their services could no longer be of any use to their country, signed and sent in an instrument of their resignation. These were—*Ayala*, the president; *Loxero*, the secretary; and *Tercera*. Doctor San Martin proceeded to a small place called Zarate, where *Don Antonio Cumplido*, *Don Pedro Villaseñor*, and *Don Pedro Bermeo*, were appointed *governantes*, in lieu of the others; and San Martin became president by reason of seniority.

The new government was encompassed with difficulties, which it was almost impossible to overcome; and, however great may have been its zeal to restore order, and give a new impulse to the cause of the revolution, an event occurred that prevented it from displaying its exertions: for, in the month of February, 1818, its members were surprised by a party of the enemy, who entered Zarate, and took prisoner the president, San Martin; the infirmities of the old gentleman preventing him from escaping with his

coadjutors. Cumplido resigned his place, under the impression that matters were in so desperate a state, as to render nugatory the establishment of any regular government. Nevertheless, a form of civil authority was still kept up; and *Don José Pagola*, a worthy and intelligent patriot, and *Don Mariano Sanchez de Ariola*, were appointed to fill the places of San Martin and Cumplido. The two new members, with *Don Pedro Villaseñor* and *Bermeo*, therefore constituted the government; and Villaseñor was elected president.

The first subject that occupied the attention of the new government, was a dissension between Padre Torres and two of his officers, *Don Andres Delgado* and the Brigadier Huerta. Both these officers commanded strong bodies of patriots. Delgado was at the head of the troops lately under the command of the murdered chief Flores. The conduct of Torres had become so insupportably outrageous and tyrannical, that Delgado and Huerta refused longer to submit to his authority, and called a council of the patriot chiefs, in the month of April, at Puruandiro, (at which Torres attended) for the purpose of nominating a new commander-in-chief. Colonel *Don Juan Arago* was named to fill the place of Torres. The

padre sullenly retired from the meeting, accompanied by a few of the least respectable of the chiefs. He had the address to induce them to sign a petition to the government in his behalf, in which they declared their satisfaction with his conduct, and prayed that he might retain his station. The government, however, ratified the nomination of Arago, and appointed him commandant-general of the province of Guanajuato; permitting Torres to retire with all his honours, and to draw the pay corresponding with his rank. The appointment of Colonel Arago was a most mortifying circumstance to the padre, who had always regarded him with envy.

The restless and ambitious priest was not, however, disposed to submit, without an effort to re-establish himself in the supreme command. On the 28th of April, having with him nearly fifteen hundred troops, including infantry, he received intelligence that a light division of the enemy, four hundred strong, under Colonel Bustamante, was in the rancho *de los Frijoles*. As a means of regaining his popularity, he determined to attack the enemy. He took them completely by surprise; yet, notwithstanding, the action was most disgracefully lost, in consequence of his injudicious dispositions, and his

own personal bad conduct. Scarcely had the engagement commenced, when the cavalry, from one of those unaccountable terrors with which they were occasionally seized, without entering into action, fled. Torres, who was some distance in the rear, seeing the confusion, instead of attempting to rally, outstripped them in the flight. The infantry, thus abandoned, and left to contend, without even a hope of success, against overpowering odds, regarding their situation as desperate, formed under some trees, and, with determined valour, defended themselves, until every individual but one was killed. The head of their commander, Lieutenant Wolfe, was struck off, carried to Irapuato, and there elevated upon a pole.

As soon as Arago received his appointment from the government, he communicated the information to Torres; who answered, that the appointment was illegal, and would be resisted. Among the chiefs who had been instrumental in depriving Torres of his command, was Don Andres Delgado, well known to the Gachupins by the name of "El Giro." He was an Indian, and, though destitute of education, was particularly acute, and admirably calculated for partisan warfare. His courage was impetuous, and his activity astonished the enemy. He was

only twenty-five years of age, and in his short military career had received twenty-two wounds. The dragoons of the Valle de Santiago, the finest and most efficient body of patriots in Mexico, were under his command. Few of the royal troops were equal to them in the field,—none exceeded them in courage. They were mounted on the finest horses the country could produce; and, unlike other bodies of patriots, were constantly in operation against the enemy, keeping that part of the Baxio about Salamanca and Zelaya in a state of continual alarm. El Giro, and his whole troop, hated and despised Torres; and they anxiously awaited an order to force him into obedience: but Arago was aware of the evil consequences attendant upon dissention, and therefore determined to try pacific measures, before he resorted to force.

Torres was attended by the ex-president, Don Ignacio Añala, a man full of duplicity and cunning, by whose advice he had opposed the recent changes. The force that Torres had under his immediate command was about one hundred and twenty men; but he was privately upheld by Don Encarnacion Ortiz and Don Miguel de Borja.

Mina's division was now nearly annihilated, *nine officers and four soldiers* only surviving.

Those who had been with Torres, neglected and ill-treated, had, with one exception, left him: and that solitary individual, as soon as Arago received his preferment, abandoned the padre, and rejoined his comrades.

Arago, finding that all his attempts to bring Torres to an acknowledgment of his authority proved abortive, reluctantly had recourse to arms. Torres, unable to cope with the forces of Arago, fled to his friends, Borja and Ortiz. Conceiving that with their aid it was still possible for him to regain his lost power, he issued an arrogant and absurd proclamation, declaring the establishment of the government in the Tierra Caliente to be illegal, commanding obedience to Don Ignacio Añala as the only legitimate head of the civil authority, and calling on all true Americans to aid him in the vindication of his title. From Burras, the padre set out, with about three hundred men, furnished him by Borja and Ortiz, for Penjamo, of which place, Arago, as successor to the comandancia, had taken possession, in the month of July. Arago soon received a communication from these friends of Torres, stating, that a desire to arrange matters amicably, and not an intention of acting with hostility, had induced them to afford the padre an escort, and to accompany

him themselves. After some correspondence, it was agreed, that at Surumuato, on the bank of the Rio Grande, with the river between the parties, the differences should be discussed. Arago, as well to avoid the effusion of blood, as to avert the fatal consequences which must arise to the cause of their country from these dissensions, and which had hitherto been its destruction, deemed it expedient to assent to the conference, although he was perfectly aware of the perfidious intentions of Torres and his partisans.

With two hundred men, he therefore repaired to Surumuato: but, soon after the discussion was opened, it became obvious that nothing short of reinstating the padre in his former power, and acknowledging the acts of the government to be illegal, would settle the dispute. Arago, after spending two days in fruitless attempts at pacification, perceiving that his opponents were only amusing him in order to gain time and receive reinforcements of troops, broke up the conference, by giving them a certain number of hours finally to make up their minds whether they would or would not obey the orders of the government. No answer being returned within the time, Arago immediately adopted measures to reduce the refrac-

tory padre and his partisans by force of arms. Accordingly, El Giro, with only a few of his brave Santiago dragoons, soon decided the matter; gallantly swimming the river, about twenty of his men attacked their opponents, and routed them. Torres was saved from capture only by the speed of his horse; he fled to the mountains of Penjamo, where he collected some of the fugitives. His friends, finding that disaster only would attend the struggle, finally sent in their adherence to the government. Various skirmishes took place between the contending parties, in which Torres invariably came off with disgrace; but, notwithstanding all the exertions of Arago to obtain possession of his person, the wily priest eluded him, as he had formerly done the royalists. This contest between Arago and Torres was terminated by the advance of a division of royalists, in September, under the command of Colonel Marquez Donallo, to Penjamo. A post was established in that pueblo, which cut off Torres from his places of retreat in the mountains and plains. The padre thenceforth found his situation daily becoming more desperate; and at length, in utter despair, he disbanded his few remaining troops, and, with his adviser Añala and a few domestics, threw him-

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self on the protection of the brothers Ortiz. They interceded with the government in his behalf; and, notwithstanding his previous infamous and treacherous conduct merited severe punishment, yet he was allowed to remain unmolested in that part of the country, on the express condition that he should neither directly nor indirectly interfere in the public affairs. This condition was guaranteed by Ortiz; and thus terminated the disgraceful career of this ambitious priest. In the month of June, last year, he was wandering among the mountains within the range of Don Encarnacion Ortiz, in the vicinity of San Felipe, eluding the pursuit of the royalists, and trembling for his safety even among his former friends. It was fortunate for him that he did not fall into the hands of El Giro: for such was the conviction of Mina's officers of his treachery towards their deceased general, and so exasperated were they at his shameful conduct with regard to themselves, that they certainly would have permitted him to fall a sacrifice to the vengeance of that chieftain and his men.

The situation of the patriots in the province of Guanajuato was daily becoming more critical; but, although every pueblo of any importance was occupied by the royalists, still the

patriots carried on an irregular warfare. They roamed among the mountains and through the plains, occasionally skirmishing with the enemy; but neither observing order among themselves, nor aiming at a combined plan of operations. With the exception of El Giro and his troop, they at length merited an appellation little better than that of banditti, so generally applied to them by the royalists.

In the western Tierra Caliente, the cause of the patriots assumed a brighter aspect. The enemy had there steadily pursued the system adopted in Guanajuato, of throwing bodies of troops into every pueblo: by which means, they had so far subdued opposition, as to flatter themselves that the pacification of the western part of the province of Valladolid would soon be accomplished, the more especially as they had compelled the patriots under the command of Lieutenant-General *Don Vicente Guerrero* to retire into the mountains near the shores of the Pacific ocean. This officer is one of those extraordinary men whom revolutions bring into notice. During the life, and after the death of General Morelos, Guerrero had distinguished himself by his intrepidity and activity. On one occasion, in the mountains of the Misteca, with only about one hundred and forty Misteca

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Indians under his orders, whose only weapons consisted of clubs and slings, he particularly signalized himself by a brilliant achievement.

The royalists were frequently careless in their encampments at night, and particularly in the Misteca, where they knew that Guerrero had not an armed force to attack them. A party of three hundred royalists having encamped a few miles from where Guerrero was stationed with his Indians, he proposed to his men to make an attack on the enemy during a rainy and stormy night. The plan was agreed on, and executed with such silence and celerity, that Guerrero was in the midst of the encampment before the enemy were aware of his approach. The royalists were panic-struck, and attempted to fly: many of them were killed, and the whole of their arms, baggage, &c. &c. fell into the hands of Guerrero. This, and other similar exploits, had made him renowned among the patriots of the Misteca; but towards the latter part of 1817, he had been so severely pressed by superior numbers of the royalists, that he was obliged to retire from the Misteca, and, with a servant, passing through the lines of the enemy, reached the Tierra Caliente of Valladolid; where, after encountering many vicissitudes in the autumn of the following

year, he with eighty men surprised a strong party of four hundred of the enemy, destroying nearly the whole of them. This exploit threw some arms into his power, with which he lighted up a flame that rapidly spread over the Tierra Caliente; and, before the enemy could recover from the surprise which this new antagonist created, he attacked their different posts, beat them in detail, and roused the drooping spirits of the patriots in the western parts of Mexico, as well as of Valladolid. The viceroy, alarmed at this rapid and unexpected progress of the patriots, transmitted orders to adopt the most vigorous measures against Guerrero: accordingly, Brigadier Negrete was ordered to advance with a strong division to the Tierra Caliente, threatening at once to annihilate Guerrero and his party. In conformity with his orders, Negrete proceeded to the village of *Churumucoo*, situated on the right bank of a river which flows from the east, and unites with the Marquez a few leagues from the village,—the junction of which rivers forms the *Zacatula*. He found the patriot chief posted on the opposite side of the river; but, not deeming it prudent to attack him, finding that he could not long maintain his own position for want of provisions and fearing the destructive in-

fluence of the climate, he made a retrograde movement, and, much to the vexation of the royalist subjects, returned to Valladolid without achieving any thing.

At this period, Don Miguel de Borja was chosen by some part of the troops of Xalpa, for their commander in chief; to accept of which station it was necessary for him to give up his comandancia of Burras.

The occupation of Penjamo by the enemy had deprived Arago of those pecuniary resources from which he had calculated to raise and equip his forces; and, believing that by good management ample means might be obtained at Burras, and that great advantages would result from the communication he could establish with the patriotic inhabitants of Guanaxuato, from the vicinity of that city to Burras, he took the command of that district. Arago's expectations, however, were at the outset frustrated; for, on investigation, he found that his predecessor had levied so many contributions on the unfortunate farmers, that they had little left, and as he was averse to the system of exactions which Torres, Borja, and others, had pursued, he was compelled to depend on a few individuals for the urgent supplies of his few troops. A short time before Borja gave up the command

of Burras, he had received from the inhabitants twelve months' revenue in anticipation; which circumstance, united with those already mentioned, rendered it absolutely impracticable for Arago to realize any of the plans he had previously contemplated.

Before Borja left Burras, an event occurred, which filled with sorrow the breast of every true patriot. Don José Maria Liceaga, whom we have before mentioned as a distinguished and staunch defender of his country's rights, was treacherously murdered. Strong grounds exist for believing that Borja was the principal instigator of this murder. Liceaga had retired from public life, and resided on his hacienda (La Gabia), in the district of Burras. Journeying along the high road, he met a party of Borja's men, headed by one of his captains. Without any previous explanation, they furiously attacked him: he attempted to save himself by flight, but a shot from Borja's officer brought him to the ground, and he was instantly put to death. Borja has endeavoured to vindicate this horrid deed, by alleging, that Liceaga was proceeding to the town of Irapuato, to deliver himself up to the enemy, and to accept the royal pardon.

All who knew Liceaga pronounced this to be

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