

was however made for defence, and the approach of the Insurgents was hourly expected: but Hidalgo, after advancing within sight of Mexico, retreated without risking an assault. His conduct has been attributed to cowardice by some, and by others, to a wish to spare the Capital the horrors of being taken by storm; but I conceive that neither of these reasons was the true one: Hidalgo had given too many proofs of a daring spirit, for any one to suspect him of want of courage; and as to the excesses which might have been committed had he succeeded in entering Mexico by assault, he would have considered them as unavoidable evils, but which could not, for an instant, be set against the advantages which the country would derive from the termination of the contest by so decisive a blow.

The fact is, that he had not calculated upon the Viceroy's being able to assemble so considerable a force. His Indians were discouraged by the losses which they had sustained in the battle of Las Crúcēs, where, from their total ignorance of the nature of artillery, they had charged Truxillo's guns, and tried to stop the mouths of them with their straw hats, until hundreds had perished by the discharge. He foresaw that they would never be brought to face the batteries, which Vēnēgās had erected: his whole army, too, had fallen into a state of greater confusion than ever, during the march; and, on examining his supplies of ammunition, he found that there was a very great scarcity both of

powder and ball. In addition to these cogent reasons for not advancing, a courier was intercepted, with dispatches from Calleja, who had already reached Quērētārō on his way towards the Capital; so that there was every reason to suppose that he would push on by forced marches, and inclose the besiegers between his own force, and that of the Viceroy. To avoid this danger Hidalgo commenced his retreat, much to the dissatisfaction of Allende, his second in command; but his measures were so badly taken, that one might almost imagine him to have sought the peril from which he was endeavouring to escape. After a march of six days, his advanced guard, most unexpectedly, fell in with Calleja's outposts, who, on their side, were equally ignorant of the approach of the Insurgents. Calleja's troops were composed principally of Creole regiments. His cavalry was commanded by the Conde de la Cadena; and his army possessed all the advantages that superior discipline and arms could give; but it remained to be seen what effect the appearance of their countrymen, fighting for a cause, in which all Mexicans were equally interested, might produce upon their minds.

This great question was decided, on the 7th of November, 1810, in the plains of Ācūlcō. Officers who were present at the action have assured me, that the troops were wavering when they went into the field; and that, if Hidalgo had prevented his men from beginning hostilities, it was more than

questionable whether they would have been brought to fire. But the Insurgents, struck with terror at the appearance of a regular army going through its evolutions in perfect silence, and beginning to advance upon them in five separate columns, dispersed in the greatest confusion at their approach, and began firing at random upon all who came within their reach. This was an insult with which the Creole Regulars were so irritated, that they were even more eager than the Spaniards in the pursuit; and, from this moment, their line, throughout the early part of the Revolution, was decided. For many years, they were the chief support of the cause of Spain, and the most inveterate enemies of the Insurgents; nor was it until the declaration of *Iturbidē*, in 1821, that they espoused the cause of Mexican Independence. One cannot but admire the dexterity with which this feeling in favour of the Mother country, was created, and kept up. The very men who enabled *Calleja* to gain the battles of *Acūlcō* and *Cāldērōn*, would, under less skilful management, have put an end to the contest at once, by siding with their countrymen.\*

\* *Vide* Representation of Audiencia, paragraph 38, in which *Calleja* is termed "a General, whose consummate skill converted into invincible soldiers, men who, under any other direction, would have turned against their General, and their Country;" that is, (in dispassionate language,) men, who, if left to themselves, would have joined Hidalgo instead of Calleja, and fought for the Independence of Mexico, instead of against it.

Ten thousand Indians are said to have perished at *Acūlcō*; but Hidalgo and most of his officers found means to escape, and, after collecting as many of the fugitives as they could, effected a hasty retreat to *Vāllādōlīd*. *Allēndē*, having separated from his companions, took the road to *Guānjūatō*, with the intention of defending the town; but finding that he had not forces sufficient again to meet Calleja, by whom he was pursued, he evacuated the place on his approach.

Much has been said of the atrocities committed by this general, on his entry into that unfortunate city. I am far from wishing to palliate them, but there was, undoubtedly, a circumstance, which furnished him with a plea for any severities that he chose to exercise. Two hundred and forty-nine Europeans, who had escaped from the massacre at *Ālhōndīgā*, when *Hīdālgō* took it, or were found afterwards concealed in the neighbourhood, were left there by him as prisoners. The populace, furious at seeing themselves deserted by *Allēndē*, in a paroxysm of rage flew to the fort, in which these unfortunate men were confined, and, in spite of the resistance made by several respectable Creoles, many of whom were wounded in attempting to oppose them, most inhumanly massacred all the prisoners. This horrible act was perpetrated on the very morning that *Calleja* entered the town; and it was upon receiving intelligence of it, that his troops were ordered to give no quarter. This

order too, by which the innocent were confounded with the guilty, was revoked before the troops had penetrated beyond the suburbs; and I do not find that the authors, who are most zealous in the cause of the Revolution, can prove the number of those who really suffered by the sentence of decimation, pronounced afterwards against a part of the population, to have been greater than that of the Europeans, who had fallen victims to their ferocity. Besides, it must not be forgotten that, at the commencement of a Revolution, however just its causes, all those who engage in open hostilities against the established government, do it at their own peril. They must expect to be treated as traitors, until success makes heroes of them. I do not blame the Spanish Authorities so much for having done, in the first instance, what most governments would have done in their place, as I do, for having persevered in their system of severity, when time had proved its inefficacy, and when they were intreated by the Insurgents themselves, to avoid such an unnecessary effusion of blood.

Hidalgo arrived at Valladolid on the 14th of November, from whence, after allowing three days for his followers to recruit after their late losses, he proceeded, without delay, to Guädäläxärä, which town had been occupied by one of his lieutenants, on the very day, that the battle of Äcülcö was lost by himself. During this short stay at Valladolid, he was joined by another man, who, afterwards,

took a very active part in the Revolution, the advocate (el licënciädö) Don Ignäciö Löpëz Râyön, whom Hidalgo immediately appointed his confidential secretary: Râyön is one of those who did most towards reducing the Insurrection to a regularly organized system; he established the Junta of Zitäcuärö, which was the first step taken towards creating an independent government, and gave to the Patriot cause a character of respectability, which it had not before possessed.

On the 24th of November, Hidalgo made a triumphal entry into Guädäläxärä, where he was received with the greatest pomp, and, apparently, with the greatest enthusiasm. Although the excommunication originally pronounced against him had not been taken off, he assisted at a grand *Te Deum*, in the Cathedral, from whence he was conducted to the palace, where all the great Corporations came to place themselves at his orders. Soon after his arrival he was joined by Ällëndë, in conjunction with whom, though a great degree of irritation had existed between them since the retreat from Mexico, he proceeded, with his usual activity, to take measures for increasing his forces, and replacing the artillery which he had lost. This he effected, by bringing a number of cannon from Sän Bläs, (the great dock-yard and arsenal of the Spaniards, on the Western coast;) some of which, though of a very large size, (24-pounders) were conveyed, by the Indians, over a mountainous dis-

trict, across which no communication had ever before been thought practicable. It would have been well for Hidalgo's reputation, if these cares alone had occupied him; but, during his stay in Guädälaxārā, he was guilty of an action, which leaves a foul blot upon his name. I have already remarked his inexorable spirit, and his bitter enmity towards every thing Spanish. All the Europeans in the town were thrown into confinement, upon his arrival: their number was so great, that it was necessary to distribute them amongst the different convents; and it is not improbable that they may not have been as guarded in their conversation there, as circumstances required. But, without any other crime being alleged against them than this,—on some vague rumours of a conspiracy amongst the prisoners, Hidalgo determined to make away with them all. This cruel resolution was carried into effect with a cold-bloodedness which is really horrible.

No form of trial, no previous examination even, was thought necessary; but the prisoners were brought out, by twenty and thirty at a time, and conducted, under the veil of night, by some of Hidalgo's creatures, to retired parts of the mountains in the vicinity of the city, where they were butchered in secret, the use of fire-arms being prohibited, for fear of creating any alarm. This detestable system of midnight executions commenced at Valladolid, where Hidalgo ordered eighty Europeans to be be-

headed on the Cerro de la Bätēä, during the three days which he passed in the town; but, in Guädälaxārā, the number of victims was between seven and eight hundred. There is every reason to believe too, that he intended to pursue the same line of conduct in future, and to establish it as a general rule amongst his adherents; for a letter was produced on his trial, written by him to one of his lieutenants, in which, after recommending him to go on seizing the persons of as many Spaniards as possible, he adds, "and if you should have any reason to suspect your prisoners of entertaining restless, or seditious, ideas, or discover amongst them, any dangerous intentions, *bury them in oblivion at once*, by putting such persons to death, with all necessary precautions, in some secret and solitary place, where their fate may remain for ever unknown."

Nothing can be more horrible than the idea of thus reducing assassination to a system; and, even setting humanity and morality entirely aside, nothing could be more ill judged. It drove the Spaniards to despair, and furnished them, at the same time, with an excuse for any atrocities which they chose to commit. It discredited the cause of the Revolution, and prevented a number of respectable Creoles from espousing it. Allende himself, is said to have been so disgusted with the cruelty of his chief, that nothing but the approach of Calleja prevented him from abandoning him.

The cannon which the Insurgents had found at

San Blas, were so numerous, that Hidalgo, though there were only 1,200 muskets in the whole army, imagined that, with the assistance of his batteries, he should be able to repulse Calleja's forces. Allende foresaw that the want of discipline amongst the troops, would produce the same effect as at Aculco, and wished not to try another action; but being out-voted, in a council of war, he was forced to submit. The bridge of Căldērōn, (about sixteen leagues from Guădălăjără,) was fortified, and the Mexicans awaited there the approach of the Royalist army.

Calleja, after having passed nearly six weeks in Guănăxūātō, began his march towards the North; and on the 16th of January, 1811, the two armies were, once more, in sight. On the 17th, a general action took place, the event of which completely justified Allende's predictions. After some partial successes, on the part of the Mexicans, who repulsed two or three attacks, in one of which the Conde de la Cadena (Calleja's second in command) was killed; the explosion of an ammunition-waggon threw the whole army into confusion; but, as they had fought better, so they lost fewer men than at Aculco. Hidalgo and Allende effected an orderly retreat, in the direction of the Provincias Internas. Răyōn returned to Guădălăjără, to carry off the military chest, which contained 300,000 dollars. This he effected, as Calleja, satisfied with his victory, did not attempt to pursue the Insurgents, or even to enter Guada-

laxara, until four days after the battle. It is from the bridge of Căldērōn, where this action was fought, that he takes the title of Conde de Căldērōn; under which, in the year 1820, in Spain, he was surprised and made prisoner by Riego, in the midst of the army which he was destined to lead to Mexico, in order to terminate the work, which he had commenced ten years before.

The Insurgent Chiefs arrived in safety at Săltillō, with about 4000 men. There it was determined that Rayon should be left in command of the troops, while Hīdălgō, Ăllēndě, Ăldămă, and Ăbăsōlō, pushed on, with an escort, for the frontiers of the United States, where they intended to purchase arms and military stores, with a part of the treasure which they had saved. They were surprised, on the road, by the treachery of a former associate, Don Ignacio Ēlīzōndō, who, having declared, at first, for the Revolution, was anxious to make his peace with the Government, by so valuable a capture. They were made prisoners on the 21st of March, 1811, and conveyed to Chīhūāhuă, where, such was the anxiety of the Government to draw from them some information as to the ramifications of the Insurrection, in the different provinces, that their trial was protracted until the end of July; when Hidalgo, having been previously degraded, was shot. His companions shared the same fate: they all appear to have met death with great firmness; at least, I have heard even Spaniards allow that the accounts

published at the time, of their confessions, and alleged penitence, were fabrications.

It is not my intention to follow the history of the Revolution, after Hidalgo's death, through all the mazes of a Guerrilla war. Throughout the whole territory of Mexico, from Veracruz to the Provincias Internas of the North, Insurgent parties were organized, and the Royalist troops employed in their pursuit. But there was no concert amongst their leaders, many of whom were barbarous and illiterate men, while each considered himself as independent in his own particular district. Răyōn assumed the command of the remains of Hidalgo's forces at Saltillo, and retreated with them upon Zăcătēcăs; but his authority was acknowledged by none but his own men. The Baxio was laid under contribution by the parties of Muñiz, and the Padre Năvărretě: Sěrrănō and Ōsōrnō commanded in the Provinces of La Puebla, and Veracruz; and even the valley of Mexico swarmed to such a degree with partizans, that all communication between the Capital and the Interior was cut off, while sentinels were *lassoed*\* at the very gates of the town. But still the authority of the Viceroy was acknowledged in all the principal cities, and the Creoles were unable to assemble

\* The lasso, respecting which the works of Captain Hall, and Captain Head, contain so many amusing particulars, is as generally used in Mexico, as in Chile, or the Pampas, and that, not merely in catching horses, or cattle, but as an offensive weapon.

any force that could meet the army of Calleja in the field. Little, therefore, was done towards bringing the contest to a close, although the country was devastated, and hardly a day passed without some partial action being fought.

Răyōn seems to have been the first to perceive that nothing but a general coalition could enable his countrymen to contend with an enemy, who had the power of directing an overwhelming force upon any particular point, and thus destroying its opponents in detail. To effect this, he conceived the idea of a National Junta, to be created by some sort of popular election, and acknowledged by all the Insurgent chiefs; and he selected the town of Zītăcŭărō, in the State of Valladolid, as the best residence for such an assembly; public opinion having pronounced itself more decidedly in favour of the Insurgents in that Province, than in any other.

With this view he occupied Zītăcŭărō, about the end of May, (1811,) and having repulsed an attack made upon it, on the 22nd of June, by Brigadier Ęmpărăn, at the head of 2000 men, he proceeded in the execution of his favourite plan, in which he was so far successful, that, on the 10th of September 1811, a Junta, or Central Government, was installed, composed of five members, elected by as large an assembly of the most respectable farmers, and landed proprietors of the district, as could be collected for the occasion, in conjunction with the Ayuntamiento, and inhabitants of the town.