

The principles laid down by the New Junta, in its first declarations, seem to have formed the basis of those adopted by Iturbide, ten years later, in his famous plan of Iguälä : both, at least, agree in acknowledging Ferdinand VII. as Sovereign of Mexico, provided he would quit his European dominions, and occupy the throne in person, and both profess to desire a most intimate union with Spain. But there can have been but little sincerity in this, on the part of the Junta, for Mörēlös, with whom, at that time, Rayon had held but little communication, but whose name was, soon afterwards, added to those of the other members of the Government, openly blamed his colleagues for consenting to recognize a Spanish Monarch on *any terms*; while Rayon only defended the measure on the score of *expediency*, "because the name of King still possessed such influence over the lower classes, that it was highly desirable to afford them the means of continuing in a state of insurrection, without shocking, in any way, their notions of what their duty to their Sovereign required."*

The intelligence of the installation of the Junta of Zitácuarö was received, with great enthusiasm, by the Creoles throughout New Spain; but the flattering hopes which this event excited, were, unfortunately, never realized. There was not,

* Vide Original Letters, since published by Bustamante, in his Cuadro, and Representation of Audiencia, Appendix.

indeed, any want of good intentions, on the part of the Junta; but the supremacy of its members was not, at first, generally acknowledged; and when, by the accession of Morelos, they acquired additional influence, the destruction of their residence by Cällējä, and the preparations for the Congress of Chülpänzīngö, in which the Junta, itself, was, finally, merged, prevented any decisive measures from being taken. It left, however, some lasting memorials of its existence. I know few papers drawn up with greater moderation, or better calculated to produce a good, practical effect, than the Manifesto, with the proposals for Peace, or War, which was transmitted, in the name of the Junta, to the Viceroy, in the month of March, 1812.

After an eloquent picture of the state, to which fifteen months of civil war had reduced the country, and an appeal to the Viceroy, respecting the manner in which the miseries inseparable from any state of warfare, had been augmented by the wanton sacrifice of the prisoners, Dr. Cos (by whom this manifesto was drawn up) proceeds to point out to Venegas his critical position; the little dependence which he could place upon the Creole troops, who, sooner or later, must make common cause with their countrymen;—the rapid progress of the Revolution, and the total inefficacy of all the measures of severity, by which he had endeavoured to check it. He then assumes, as undeniable principles, the

natural equality of America and Spain; the right of America to assemble her Cortes, as the Spaniards had done theirs; and the nullity of the claims of any body of men in the Peninsula, to exercise the supreme authority in Mexico, during the captivity of the Sovereign: and finally, he proposes, on the part of the Junta, that, "if the Europeans will consent to give up the offices which they hold, and to allow a General Congress to be assembled, their persons and properties shall be religiously respected; their salaries paid; and the same privileges granted to them, as to the native Mexicans; who, on their side, will acknowledge Ferdinand as their Sovereign; assist the Peninsula with their treasures; and regard all Spaniards as their fellow-subjects, and citizens of the same great empire."

Such was the plan of Peace. The plan of War was confined, principally, to an endeavour to obtain some abatement of severity in the treatment of prisoners, so as to avoid unnecessary effusion of blood; and to establish the severest penalties for all such, on either side, as should sack or burn villages, where no resistance was made; or authorize indiscriminate massacres, on entering the smaller towns.

The introduction of the name of religion, in a quarrel where religion was in no way concerned, is, likewise, reprobated in very strong terms; but, in the whole course of the manifesto, there is not one offensive or insulting expression; an instance of

moderation which is the more remarkable, as, at that time, the cause of the Revolution appeared to be every where triumphant.

These proposals Venegas ordered to be burnt by the public executioner, in the Plaza Mayor of Mexico! He could not, however, prevent them from producing a great effect upon the public mind, enforced, as they were, by the example and success of Mörēlōs, whose career it will now be my duty to trace, as furnishing one of the most interesting episodes in the Mexican Revolution.

We left Morelos, in October, 1810, setting out from Valladolid, with a commission from Hidalgo to act as Captain-general of the provinces on the South-Western coast, without any other retinue than a few servants, from his own curacy, armed with six muskets, and some old lances. The first addition which he received to this force, on arriving on the coast, was a numerous band of slaves from Pētālāñ, and other towns, eager to purchase their liberty on the field of battle: arms were, however, so scarce, that twenty muskets, which were discovered in Pētālāñ, were considered as a most invaluable acquisition. The brothers, Don José, and Don Antonio, Gälēāñā, who had already declared for the cause of Independence, joined him, soon afterwards, with their adherents, (November, 1810,) and increased his numbers to about a thousand men. With this force Morelos advanced upon Acapulco. He was met by the Commandant

of the district, Don Francisco Paris, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed body of troops. Notwithstanding his superiority, Morelos, aware of the necessity of commencing his operations by a *coup-d'éclat*, determined to attack the camp of the Royalists by night. The attempt was crowned with complete success. On the 25th of January, 1811, the enemy was surprised, and thrown into such confusion at the first onset, that they thought of nothing but a rapid flight. Eight hundred muskets, five pieces of artillery, a quantity of ammunition, and a considerable sum of money, fell into the hands of Mōrēlōs, who thus saw all his wants supplied at once. Seven hundred prisoners were taken at the same time, all of whom were treated with the greatest humanity. This successful enterprize was, as Mōrēlōs himself frequently said, the corner-stone of all his later triumphs. The rapidity of his progress, from this moment, was astonishing; and the skill with which he baffled the efforts of the divisions successively detached against him by Venegas, under the Brigadiers Llānō and Fuentēs, rendered him, in a very short time, the terror of the Spaniards, and the admiration of his own countrymen. His celebrity brought men of talent, from every quarter, to his standard. Those in whom he placed most confidence were, Don Ermenegildo Gālēānā, the Cura Mātāmōrōs, (whom he appointed his first lieutenant,) and the Brāvōs, whose whole family joined him, soon after the defeat

of Paris. The father, Don Lēōnārdō, and one of his brothers, perished in the course of the Revolution; but Don Nicolas Brāvō (the son) survived it, and has been placed, by the unanimous voice of his countrymen, with Vīctōriā, at the head of the present government.

The whole of the year 1811 was occupied by a series of petty engagements, (the details of which can only be interesting to Mexicans,) and by the strenuous efforts of Morelos to introduce something like discipline amongst the Blacks, who had enlisted in considerable numbers in his army. Their ferocity was of use in the field of battle, but it was only by frequent examples that it could be prevented from showing itself on other occasions; and it required all the firmness of Morelos to keep it within any bounds.

In the mean time, the scene of action had been, gradually, brought nearer to the Capital; and, in January 1812, the Insurgents advanced so far, that Tasco, a town famous for its mines, and only twenty-five leagues from Mexico, was taken by Gālēānā and Brāvō, after an obstinate resistance.

Various actions took place in January, and the beginning of February, 1812, in all of which Mōrēlōs was victorious; so that, at last, his advanced-guard, under Bravo, pushed on to Chalco, with outposts at San Āügüstīn de las Cūevās, within three leagues of the gates of Mexico. But the alarm which this movement excited drew upon Morelos a

more formidable opponent. Calleja was summoned to defend the Capital, with the army which had triumphed over the first Insurgents at Ācūlcō, and the bridge of Cāldērōn; but, though flushed with new successes, Morelos determined to wait its approach. Cuātlā Āmīlpās, (about twenty-two leagues from Mexico,) was the place which he selected to make his stand. It was an entirely open town, nor did he attempt to supply the want of exterior fortifications, though he was indefatigable in his endeavours to render the interior as strong as possible, by cutting trenches in the streets, walling up the doors, and lower windows of the houses, and breaking a communication within, so as to give his men every possible advantage. In this he was seconded by the activity of his Lieutenants, Brāvō, Gālēānā, and the Cura Mātāmōrōs; and such was the confidence with which they inspired their troops, that the approach of the Royal army was impatiently expected.

As Calleja, whom we left in the North of the country, did not march from thence to Cuātlā, without adding to the number of his successes over the Insurgents, it will be necessary, in order to avoid confusion, to trace his progress, before I give any account of the siege.

From the moment of its establishment, the Junta of Zītācūārō was considered by the Spaniards as their most formidable enemy; and Venegas, in December 1811, sent positive orders to Calleja, then at

Acāmbārō, in the province of Mīhōācān, to march, with all his forces, against the town. Calleja obeyed; and his army sustained such hardships, and overcame such difficulties on the way, in crossing a country where roads were unknown, and where, at times, they were forced to cut their way through forests so thick, that it required the labour of twenty-four hours to enable them to advance a single league, that even their enemies speak of the undertaking with admiration.

On the 1st of January, 1812, Cālējā arrived before Zītācūārō; and on the 2nd, he attacked, and carried the town by assault, which must have been badly defended, as, from the strength of its situation, it was capable of making considerable resistance. The Junta escaped to Sūltēpec, where it established a new seat of Government; but the honour of having been selected for its first residence proved fatal to Zītācūārō. Calleja, after having passed a fortnight there, which he employed principally in examining Rayon's papers, decimated the inhabitants, ordered the walls to be rased, and burnt the town on his departure, sparing only the churches and convents.*

From Zītācūārō, he proceeded, by forced marches, to Mexico, where Venegas most anxiously expected him, in order to check the progress of Morelos. The army made a triumphal entry into the Capital, on

* I saw this unfortunate town in 1826. The situation is lovely, but the place is still in ruins.

the 6th of February, 1812; they were received with salutes, and a grand *Te Deum* in the cathedral, and a general promotion took place. But this important point was no sooner arranged, than Venegas became as impatient for the departure of his guests, as he had been for their arrival. He had always been jealous of Calleja; but now, when brought into contact, the misunderstanding rose to such a height, that they would have kept no terms, had the stay of the army been prolonged. Fortunately, the vicinity of Morelos afforded a pretext for a speedy separation; and on the 14th of February, 1812, Calleja began his march towards Cuautlā Amilpas, which he threatened with the fate of Zitacuaro.

Morelos, on the approach of the Royalists, (February 18th,) went out, with a small escort, to reconnoitre them, and had the imprudence to advance so far, that he was charged by a party of cavalry, lost several of his men, and would, probably, have been made prisoner himself, had not Gálēañā, who was afraid of his exposing himself too much, kept a party in readiness, with which he sallied out in person to his rescue. It was upon this occasion that *Don José Maria Fernāndez*, now General Victoria, first distinguished himself: his father was a considerable landholder in the Provincias Internas, and Victoria, at the age of twenty-two, had just completed his studies for the bar, in the Capital, when the Revolution broke out. From the first, his

resolution to espouse the cause of his country was taken, but it was not until he saw a man of acknowledged merit at the head of the Insurgents, that he determined to place himself under his orders. The instant Morelos's character was known, he left the Capital, and joined him as a volunteer.

In the present skirmish, which was a very sharp one, he received a severe wound, by which, however, he was the means of saving Galeana's life. Morelos was brought off with difficulty; but he had the pleasure of seeing that his men, far from being intimidated by the idea of having to contend with troops, who advanced with the character of invincible, had never behaved better than in this affair.

Early in the morning of the 19th, Calleja made a general attack upon the town. His army advanced in four columns, with the artillery in the centre, and, animated by the recollection of the late success at Zitācuarō, which was infinitely superior to Cuautlā in point of strength, the troops came on like men resolved to carry every thing before them. The Mexicans allowed them to approach within one hundred yards of their entrenchments, in the Plaza of San Diego; but there they opened so tremendous a fire, that the column was forced to retreat precipitately. Galeana, who commanded in the Plaza, seeing a Spanish colonel at some distance from his troops, and endeavouring to bring them up to the charge again, sallied out upon him alone, engaged him hand to hand, and killed him on the

spot; an action, which contributed, not a little, to raise the spirits of his own men. Indeed, nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which Morelos had inspired both his troops, and the inhabitants of the town. The Indians, who were stationed upon the flat roofs of the houses, did great execution with their slings, and assisted in preventing the enemy, when once thrown into disorder, from forming again. Morelos himself was equally successful with Galeana in repulsing the column which attacked the Plaza de St. Domingo, where he commanded in person. The action lasted from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon; when Calleja, after a fruitless attempt to decoy the Mexicans from their entrenchments, by pretending to abandon his artillery, drew off his men, (leaving five hundred dead upon the spot,) and retired, in good order, to a little village, about a league from the town, where he established his head-quarters.

The event of the day had so completely discouraged him, that he did not think of risking another assault, but determined to lay siege to Cuātlā in form, and wrote to Venegas for supplies of artillery, ammunition, and men. Venegas immediately sent him all that the magazines of the Capital contained; and ordered Brigadier Llano, who had before been opposed to Morelos, to join the army of the Centre with his whole division. The courier charged with the Viceroy's dispatches having fallen into the hands of an Insurgent party, Morelos was perfectly aware

of the increase of force, which Calleja was about to receive; but he felt, likewise, that the eyes of all Mexico were turned upon the contest at Cuātlā, and that a retreat would defeat the hopes, which the repulse of the Royalists, in their first attack, had excited. He determined, therefore, to defend himself to the last, in a place where, according to the rules of war, defence was impossible; and this resolution was most gallantly carried into effect.

Llano was, at this time, engaged in an attack upon Īzūcār, which was successfully defended by Don Vicente Güerrērō, who had, at that time, begun his long and perilous career. In the course of the Revolution, this general had received upwards of fifty wounds, and has had almost as many miraculous escapes: one of the most extraordinary, perhaps, was at Īzūcār, where, while he was asleep, exhausted with fatigue, a small shell came through the roof, and rolled under his bed, where it exploded, and killed, or wounded, every person in the room, but himself.

On the receipt of the Viceroy's orders, Llano quitted Īzūcār, and joined Cällējā on the 1st of March. On the 4th, Calleja on one side, and Llano on the other, began to cannonade, and bombard the town, after having erected batteries and breastworks in the course of a single night.

The first shells alarmed the inhabitants excessively; but, within twenty-four hours, they grew so accustomed to them, that the very children were