

Such was the Treaty of Cordova, which was signed by Iturbide, "as the depository of the will of the Mexican people," and by O'Donoju, as the representative of Spain, on the 24th of August, 1821. The best excuse for the concessions made by the latter is, as stated by Iturbide,* the fact, that he had no alternative. He must have signed the treaty, or become a prisoner, or returned at once to Spain, in which case his countrymen would have been compromised, and his Government deprived of those advantages, which the Mexicans were still willing to concede. Under these circumstances, it is not easy to point out what O'Donoju could have done for Spain better than what he did; although the advantages were, at first, most apparent upon the Creole side. Iturbide obtained, in virtue of the treaty of Cordova, immediate possession of the Capital, which he entered in triumph on the 27th of September, 1821, and, on the following day, the Provisional Junta was installed, the establishment of which was provided for by the fifth Article of the plan of Iguala. This Junta, which was composed of thirty-six persons, elected a Regency, consisting of five individuals, of which Iturbide was made President: he was at the same time created Generalissimo, and Lord High Admiral, and assigned a yearly salary of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

* *Vide* Statement, page 21.

Up to this time Iturbide's plans had been completely successful. He seemed to have carried the nation along with him, and, in every thing that could tend to promote a separation from Spain, not a single dissenting voice had been heard. But, from the moment that the future organization of the Government came under discussion, this apparent unanimity was at an end. One of the first duties of the Provisional Junta was to prepare a plan for assembling a National Congress; and this, at Iturbide's suggestion, was done in such a way as to pledge the Deputies to the adoption of the plan of Iguala in all its parts, by obliging them to swear to observe it, before they could take their seats in the Congress. Many of the old Insurgents thought that this was restricting too much the powers of the people, who ought to be allowed to approve, or reject, through the medium of their representatives, what had been done in their name, but without their authority. Guadalupe Victoria was one of the advocates of this opinion, and was driven again into banishment by the persecution which it drew upon him. Generals Bravo and Guerrero were likewise of the same mode of thinking, as, indeed, were a host of others; and thus, although Iturbide succeeded in carrying his point, and in compelling the deputies to take the oath proposed, the seeds of discontent were sown before the sessions of the Congress commenced.

On the 24th February, 1822, the first Mexican

Cortes met, and three distinct parties were soon organized amongst the members. The Bourbonists, who wished to adhere to the plan of Iguala altogether, and to have a Constitutional monarchy, with a Prince of the House of Bourbon at its head. The Republicans, who denied the right of the army to pledge the nation by the plan of Iguala at all, and wished for a Central or Federal Republic: and the Iturbidists, who adopted the plan of Iguala, with the exception of the article in favour of the Bourbons, in lieu of whom they wished to place Iturbide himself upon the throne.

Upon the merits of the respective creeds of these parties, I shall make no comments: each probably thought that it had good reasons for adopting that which it did adopt, and each, certainly, hoped to derive considerable advantages from the triumph of its own.

The Bourbonists soon ceased to exist as a party, the Cortes of Madrid having, by a Decree dated the 13th of February, 1822, declared the Treaty of Cordova "to be illegal, null and void, in as far as the Spanish Government and its subjects were concerned," thereby precluding the possibility of the acceptance of the crown of Mexico by a junior member of the Royal Family. The struggle was thenceforward confined to the Iturbidists and the Republicans, between whom a violent contest was long carried on,—the Congress accusing the Regency, and its President, of wasteful expenditure, and Iturbide as

loudly accusing the Congress of an intention to destroy "the most meritorious part of the community"—the army, by not providing funds for its support. These bickerings were increased by the introduction of a project in the Congress, for reducing the troops of the line, from sixty, to twenty thousand men, and supplying the deficiency by calling out an auxiliary force of thirty thousand militia. This measure was most strenuously opposed by Iturbide, but was, nevertheless, carried by a large majority, in the beginning of April. From that moment his friends saw that his influence was on the wane, and that if they wished ever to see him upon the throne, the attempt must be made before the memory of his former services was lost. Their measures were concerted accordingly. No men of rank were employed in carrying them into execution, but recourse was had to the Sergeants, and non-commissioned officers of the garrison, who were, in general, much attached to Iturbide's person. These men, headed by one Pio Marcha, the first sergeant of the Infantry regiment No. 1, and seconded by a crowd of the leperos, (lazzaroni) by whom the streets of Mexico are infested, assembled before Iturbide's house on the night of the 18th of May, 1822, and proclaimed him emperor, under the title of Augustin the First, amidst shouts and *Vivas*, and firing, which lasted through the whole of the night. The old and stale manœuvre of pretending to yield, reluctantly, to the will of the people, was repeated upon this oc-

casion, as detailed by Iturbide himself;* and was kept up during the whole of the next day, when the Congress was employed in discussing the strange title to a crown, which the Commander-in-chief stated himself to have derived from the acclamations of a mob; while Iturbide, after filling the galleries with his partizans in arms, endeavoured, like the prince of hypocrites, as he proved himself upon this occasion, to obtain a hearing for those who were adverse to his nomination. The discussion ended, of course, by the approbation of a step, which it was not in the power of Congress to oppose; and Iturbide was proclaimed Emperor, with the sanction of the National Assembly. The choice was ratified by the Provinces, without opposition; and had the new Sovereign been able to moderate his impatience of restraint, and allowed his authority to be confined within the constitutional bounds, which the Congress was inclined to prescribe for it, there is little doubt that he would have been, at this day, in peaceable possession of the throne, to which his own abilities, and a concurrence of favourable circumstances, had raised him. But the struggle for power, far from being terminated by his elevation, seemed only to have become more implacable. The Emperor demanded privileges inconsistent with any balance of power;—a Veto upon all the articles of the Constitution then under discussion, and the right of ap-

* *Vide* Statement, pages 38, 39, and 40.

pointing and removing, at pleasure, the members of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice. He recommended, likewise, the establishment of a Military Tribunal in the Capital, with powers but little inferior to those exercised by the Spanish Commandants during the Revolution; and when these proposals were rejected, (as they were with great firmness, by the Congress,) he arrested, on the night of the 26th August, 1822, fourteen of the Deputies, who had advocated, during the discussion, principles but little in unison with the views of the Government.

This bold measure was followed by a series of reclamations and remonstrances on the part of the Congress, which produced no other effect than that of widening the breach between the Emperor and the National Assembly, until, at last, it became evident that the two could not exist together. Iturbide terminated the dispute, as Cromwell had done, under similar circumstances, before him, by sending an officer to the Hall of Congress, with a simple notification that the Assembly had ceased to exist, and an order to dissolve it by force, should any attempt at resistance be made. But no compulsion was required: the Deputies, many of whom were prepared beforehand for what was about to occur, dissolved their sessions at once, and the doors of the edifice in which they met, were closed by the officer whom Iturbide had commissioned to make known to them his will.

This took place on the 30th October, 1822,

and, on the same day, a new Legislative Assembly was created by the Emperor, which was called the Instituent Junta, and consisted of forty-five members, selected by Iturbide himself, from amongst those whom he had found most inclined to comply with his wishes in the preceding Congress.

This body never possessed any sort of influence in the country, and, with the exception of a decree for raising a forced loan of two millions and a half of dollars, and for applying to the immediate exigencies of the State, two millions in specie, which had been sent to Veracruz by different merchants, but were detained at Perote, its records are hardly distinguished by a single public act.

Iturbide's popularity did not long survive his assumption of arbitrary power. Before the end of November, an insurrection broke out in the Northern Provinces, which was headed by General Garza. It was, however, suppressed by the Imperial troops, who remained faithful to their new Sovereign. But the army was his only reliance, and, unfortunately for him, a schism soon afterwards took place between two of his most confidential officers.

The motives which first induced General Săntănă, the Governor of Veracruz, to turn his arms against the Emperor, are said to have been of a private nature; but of this it is impossible now to judge. All that is known to the public is, that, at the close of 1822, this young officer published an address to the nation, in which he reproached the Emperor

with having broken his Coronation oath, by dissolving the Congress, and declared his own determination, and that of the garrison under his command, to re-assemble the Congress, and to support whatever form of Government that assembly might please to adopt.

To repress this dangerous spirit, Iturbide detached General Ęchăvărĭ, a Spaniard, in whom he placed unlimited confidence, with a corps of troops sufficiently strong to invest Veracruz, and thus to compel Săntănă to submission. But that officer had been joined, in the interim, by Guadalupe Victoria, to whom he yielded the chief command, in the expectation that his name, and the known strictness of his principles, would inspire all those with confidence who were inclined to favour the establishment of a Republic. Nor was he deceived: Victoria's character proved a powerful attraction; and Ęchăvărĭ himself, after a few trifling actions in the vicinity of Puente del Rey, finding that public opinion was declaring itself every where against the Emperor, determined upon making common cause with the Garrison of Veracruz, and induced his whole army to follow his example.

On the 1st of February, 1823, an act was signed, called the Act of Casa-Mata, consisting of eleven articles, by which the armies pledged themselves to effect the re-establishment of the National Representative Assembly, and to support it against all attacks.

This act was the signal for revolt throughout the country: it was adopted by all the Provinces in rapid succession, and by most of the Military Commandants. Amongst others, by the Marquis of Vibanco, then commanding a large body of troops at La Puebla, and by Generals Guerrero and Bravo, who left the Capital in order to proclaim the new system upon their old scene of action in the West. General Nęgrętę likewise joined the Republican army, and defection soon became so general, that Iturbide, either terrified by the storm which he had so unexpectedly conjured up, or really anxious to avoid the effusion of blood, determined to attempt no resistance.

On the 8th. March, 1823, he called together all the members of the old Congress then in the Capital, and tendered his abdication, which was not accepted, because there were not at the time members enough present to form a house. On the 19th of March, he repeated the offer, and stated his intention to quit the country, lest his presence in Mexico should serve as a pretext for further dissensions. The Congress, in reply, refused to accept the abdication, which would imply (they said) a legal right to the Crown; whereas his election had been compulsory, and consequently null: but they willingly allowed him to quit the kingdom with his family, and assigned to him a yearly income of twenty-five thousand dollars (about five thousand pounds) for his support.

Iturbide was allowed to choose his own escort to the coast, and selected General Bravo for the purpose, by whom he was accompanied to Antigua, (near Veracruz), where a ship was freighted by the Government to convey him to Leghorn. He embarked on the 11th of May, 1823. A new Executive was immediately appointed by the Congress, which was composed of Generals Victoria, Bravo, and Negrete, by whom the affairs of the country were conducted, until a new Congress was assembled, (in August, 1823), which, in October 1824, definitively sanctioned the present Federal Constitution.

Many persons have attributed Iturbide's conduct, during the latter part of his career, to pusillanimity; but this is a charge which is repelled by the whole tenor of his earlier life. I am myself inclined to ascribe it partly, to a wish not to occasion a Civil war, and partly, to a lurking hope that a little time would prove as fatal to the popularity of his rivals, as it had been to his own; and that the eyes of his countrymen would then be directed towards himself, as the only means of preserving them from anarchy. Such, at least, appears to have been the impression with which he returned to Mexico in 1824, when he was outlawed by the Congress, and shot, upon landing on the coast, by General Garza; a measure, the severity of which, after the services which Iturbide had rendered to the country, can only be excused by the impossibility of avoiding, in any other way,

a civil war. His partizans in the Interior were still numerous, particularly on the Western coast, and had he once succeeded in penetrating into the country, with such men as Victoria and Bravo to oppose him, it is difficult to say how long the contest might have been protracted, or where the effusion of blood would have stopped.

Iturbide's family now resides in the United States, upon a provision assigned to it by the Mexican Congress. The partizans of the father were entirely personal, and his son has few, or no adherents: he is not, however, yet allowed to return to the territories of the Republic.

Many persons have attributed Iturbide's conduct during the latter part of his career, to partiality; but this is a charge which is repelled by the whole tenor of his earlier life. I am myself inclined to ascribe it partly, to a wish not to occasion a Civil war, and partly, to a lurking hope that a little time would prove as fatal to the popularity of his rivals, as it had been to his own; and that the eyes of his countrymen would then be directed towards himself, as the only means of preserving them from anarchy. Such, at least, appears to have been the impression with which he returned to Mexico in 1824, when he was outlawed by the Congress, and shot upon landing on the coast, by General Garza; a measure, the severity of which, after the services which Iturbide had rendered to the country, can only be excused by the impossibility of avoiding, in any other way,

BOOK III.

The form of government adopted by the Representatives of Mexico, when left by the resignation of Iturbide, a liberty to make a free and unobscured choice, was that of a Federal Republic, each member of which manages its own internal concerns, while the whole are connected into one body, either by certain general obligations and laws, contained in the Federal Constitution of the 14th October, 1824.

This instrument, after declaring the absolute independence of the country, (Article 1) adopting the Roman Catholic religion, (Article 3) and recognizing, as component parts, of the Federation, (given alphabetically) the western States of Chiapas, Chi-