

republic brought no peace or prosperity to the country, or materially advanced the interests of the city of Mexico.

A glance at the map will convince any one that the geographical position of the city of Mexico is highly important and advantageous. It is in the centre of a country of surpassing richness and beauty. But the history of this capital from the day of its foundation by the Aztecs, precisely seven centuries ago, is one of constant revolution and warfare. No earthly record worthy of credence excels it. From first to last it has been the stronghold of political dissensions and bloodshed. At the present moment, the struggle between the progressive ideas of the masses and the determined bigotry and despotism of the priesthood and their followers, is going on as fiercely as ever. But it is to be hoped the dark night that has hung over this beautiful city and country so long, is nearly over, and that in our day the light of wisdom, truth, virtue and prosperity will dawn upon the people so much abused, and of whom so little is known by all the world.

The city of Mexico, with its surrounding district, is destined to possess a dense population and all the elements of power, by which it will figure largely in the world's history, and this at no very remote day. It is destined to become the great emporium between the Pacific and the Atlantic.

## SYNOPSIS OF MEXICAN HISTORY.

AND

### GENERAL REMARKS.

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IN making up the following summary, we are indebted for much valuable information to the MEXICAN EXTRAORDINARY, published in the city of Mexico, the NEW YORK HERALD, and the correspondence of the NEW YORK TIMES.

The Aztec empire in Mexico dates from 1160. Hernando Cortes, with a small band of followers, aided by some of the native Indian tribes, achieved the conquest of that empire in 1521. Montezuma died a miserable death in the hands of Cortes; and Guatemozin, the last of the Aztec emperors, was ignominiously hung by the Spanish conqueror.

From the year 1535 until the year 1821, when Mexico obtained her independence, the country was governed by sixty-one viceroys, whose terms of service extended over a period of 286 years, giving to each viceroy rather more than four years. Among these Spanish rulers there would occasionally be found one of benevolent disposition and liberal ideas. But it must be conceded that in the main, the Spanish rule in New Spain was one of iron despotism, in which priest and soldier bore an equal part, until several millions of human beings, the constitu-



tional elements of whose character were gentleness and docility, rose against their oppressors with the determination of driving them from the land.

An obscure native *curé*, of the Indian village of Dolores, in the province of Guanajuata, named Miguel Hidalgo, headed the first Mexican revolution, which broke out in 1810. Under the cry of "*Death to the Gachupins*" (Spaniards), and the belief that their religion was endangered by the French (Joseph Bonaparte being then on the Castilian throne), the natives rallied under Hidalgo, and for a season waged a sanguinary and successful conflict against Spaniard and Creole. The revolutionary priest was finally captured and shot, July 27, 1811. A guerilla warfare followed, which in 1812 came to a head under Morelos, another native *curé*, who, aided by Matamoras, one of the same class, followed in the footsteps of Hidalgo, and continued the contest against the loyalists until November, 1815, when this really great chief was betrayed into the hands of the Spanish general Concha, at Tescmaluco, province of Puebla. Morelos was sent to the capital, tried, and condemned to be shot. He was taken to the Hospital of San Cristobal for execution, December 22, 1815. After dining, he bound the handkerchief around his head, kneeled, and ejaculating, "Lord, if I have done well thou knowest it," gave the fatal signal to his executioners, and thus calmly and heroically the soldier-priest met his fate.

Matamoras had previously been taken prisoner and shot by Iturbide, who here made his first appearance on the stage, a zealous loyalist.

The death of Morelos did not subdue the spirit of revolution. Rebel chiefs appeared at various points. Among them was that indomitable and daring patriot,

Guadalupe Victoria, of whom mention was first made as a soldier under Morelos. Xavier Mina appeared as a revolutionary leader in April, 1817, and at the head of a brave band, principally North Americans, met with so much success, as to bring against him the combined efforts of the loyalist forces. Mina was betrayed by a friar, taken prisoner, and shot, by order of Viceroy Apodaca, in November, 1817.

From 1810 to 1821 a sanguinary and cruel war was waged throughout Mexico. It commenced a war of castes, the native against the Spaniard. Up to this period, Spain had rigidly adhered to the policy of placing *all* civil power in the hands of native Spaniards. No one born in Mexico was allowed to participate in the administration of the government of the country in the slightest degree. The Gachupins were the kings and nobles of the land. The Creoles even, descendants of the Spaniards, members of their own families, were, under the universal system of degradation, made to feel an inferiority of birth and the iron heel of the oppressor. But at the commencement of the revolution under Hidalgo, the Creoles were found fighting side by side with the Spaniards. The spirit of liberty, however, became infectious, and by degrees this intermediate class went over to the insurgents, and joined them in their efforts to conquer the common enemy. This, with the operation of the constitution given to Mexico by the consent of the Cortes of Spain, in 1812, which pretended to relieve the people of their grievances, and did in reality curtail the power of the viceroy, so alarmed Apodaca, the incumbent of that office in 1821, that he resolved to restore the absolute power of Spain, and to this end proposed to Iturbide, a Creole of elegant person and polished man-



ners, to head the loyalist army then on the west coast, and proclaim the restoration of the *absolute* authority of the King of Spain over Mexico.

Iturbide assumed the leadership of the army, but, under the influence of the clergy, who were beginning to fear that the Cortes of Spain would encroach upon their enormous property and revenues, the Creole leader, instead of proclaiming anew the power of Spain, brought forth, in February, 1821, that famous document known as the "*Plan of Iguala*," the first article of which declared as follows: "*The Mexican nation is independent of the Spanish nation, and of every other, even on its own continent.*" By this act, Mexico virtually became independent of Spain.

Iturbide assumed imperial power in 1822, under the title of Augustin the First. His reign was brief. The following November, General Garza headed a revolt in the north, and Santa Anna, who was then Governor of Vera Cruz, first made himself prominent, by pronouncing against Iturbide. The Emperor Iturbide abdicated and fled from the country, and on attempting to return, July 1824, he was captured and shot.

The congress of the country had annulled the acts of the emperor, April 8th, 1823, and in October, 1824, the republican constitution was published.

In consequence of this constitution, General Victoria became the first President of Mexico on the 10th of the same month and year, and remained in power until April 1st, 1829. During this period three pronunciamientos took place. The first in 1824, when a general of the name of Lobato attempted a revolution against the Spaniards employed by the government. Second, in 1827, when General Montano headed a revolution against

the Freemason Societies and Mr. Poinsett, United States minister in Mexico at that time. Both these, however, were put down by the government. Third, in 1828, a more important pronunciamiento took place in Jalapa, and continued at Perote and Oajaca. At the same time, another broke out in the city of Mexico. This proved disastrous; and is known by the appellation of *Acordada*. On the 1st April, 1829, General Guerrero became President, but retired from government on the 18th December of the same year, in order to take command of the army, and march against General Bustamente, who had taken up arms against the liberal party, to which Guerrero belonged. From the 18th of December to the 31st of the same month, the government was provisionally in the hands of Señores Bocanegra, Velez, Quintanas and Alman, at which date General Bustamente, as Vice-President, took possession of the government, which he held till the 14th of August, 1832, when he was obliged to take command of the army, as General Vasquez, and other officers at Vera Cruz had pronounced against him. From August to December, 1832, the government was in the hands of a president *interino*, General Muzquiz, and passed on the 24th December, 1832, into the hands of the constitutional president, General Gómez Pedraza, who retired, however, on the 1st April, 1833, when the vice-president, D. V. Gómez Farías, took his place.

During that time the revolution had gained ground, and General Santa Anna was named constitutional president on the 17th June, 1833. He took the reins of power, but being obliged to head the army in order to attack Texas, January, 1835, he left the government during his absence in the hands of two vice-presidents, first to Señor Farías, and then to General Barragan. General



Barragan having died in March, 1836, Señor Corro became president *interino*, governing until April, 1837, when General Bustamente again took possession of the government, being named president, in conformity with the new constitution of the republic, by which the central system was adopted, which had been sanctioned and published on the 1st January, 1837. General Bustamente remained in power until September, 1841, with the exception of a few months in 1839, in which year General Santa Anna was intrusted with the government for three months, and General Bravo for eight days. In September, 1841, General Bustamente retired to Europe, leaving Señor D. Javier Echeverria at the head of the government until 10th October, 1841, when General Santa Anna again became president, with almost unlimited power, by an arrangement known under the name of "*Bases agreed to in Tacubaya*." This discretionary power of dictatorship ceased by the publication of a new constitution of the country on the 12th June, 1843. General Santa Anna was then named constitutional president, and remained in power until the 6th December, 1844. During these four years he was three times absent from the capital, and the government was, during this period, intrusted by him to General Bravo and General Canalizo. From December, 1844, to the end of December, 1845, General Herrera was president; from December, 1845, to July, 1846, General Paredes, and from July to August 1846, General Bravo occupied the place of General Paredes, who, in his turn, had to give way in August to General Salas, who remained in power till December, 1846, after having re-established the federal system on the constitution of 1824, by his decree of 22d August, 1846. Señor Gómez Farías then occupied

the position of vice-president from December, 1846, till March, 1847. During this time General Santa Anna was named president. He assumed power on the 21st March, 1847, but left the government to General Anaya, in order to take command of the army in the field against the troops of the United States. On his return to the capital in May, 1847, he again took the government into his hands, and remained in power until September, 1847, when the capital was taken by the Americans.

From this time the government retired to Queretaro, and Señor Peña y Peña at one time, and General Anaya at another, were at the head of it till after the peace, when General Herrera again took possession of the government on the 3d of June, 1848. He retired in January, 1851, when General Arista became president, but in consequence of the plan of Guadalajara, retired in January, 1853. Señor Ceballos and General Lombardini, entered as presidents for a short time, until General Santa Anna, already elected president, had arrived from Turbaco, in Carthagena. His arrival took place in Vera Cruz, April, 1853, and shortly afterward he entered the capital and left again on the 11th of August, 1855, for Vera Cruz, to embark. General Rómulo Diaz de la Vega took charge of the capital as chief of the district. On the 15th of August, four days after the departure of Santa Anna, Don Martin Carrera, one of the most patriotic and distinguished generals, was elected president *interino* of the republic, by a junta at the capital, but his election not being sustained by the civil or military voice of the states, he abdicated on the 12th of September, after holding position one month. General La Vega continued to govern, according to the plan of Ayutla, from the 12th of September until the 4th of October, when