

The first Martyr of Mexican Liberty But the Church party and the Spaniards were too strong for the natives. Excommunicated by the church, hunted by the army, and destitute of the discipline, the weapons, and the munitions of war, the struggle of the poor Indians for freedom was unequal. Betrayed by Bustamente, Hidalgo was captured and shot—the first martyr for the liberties of Mexico!

The victims of oppression did not, however, give up the contest. General Morelos, Lieutenant in command under Hidalgo, continued the war, summoned a National Congress in September, 1813, which, in October of the following year, promulgated the principles embodied in the "Constitution Apatzingan."

Union of the Creoles and Indians. In 1820 the first considerable movement was made to unite the Creole and the Indian elements in common cause against "despots and bad government." The combination was made, and deeds of heroic patriotism on one side, and of appalling barbarity on the other, mark the history. Relentless cruelties and retaliations banished mercy from the human heart.

Spanish atrocities. Mayer, in his political history of Mexico, says that "after the first successes of the Mexicans, there was a period of reaction, when the Spaniards again obtained a temporary mastery under General Calleja, and the annals of the time teem with accounts of the sanguinary vengeance wreaked by that inhuman monster on the victims who fell within his grasp. After he had obtained possession of the revolted city of Guanajuato, he caused the inhabitants to be driven into the great square of the town, and *near fourteen thousand men, women, and children were butchered* like cattle on the spot. Proclaiming that powder and ball were too costly to be wasted in their execution, he let loose his soldiery on the defenceless crowd,

with an order 'to cut their throats,'—and it is related that the fountains and gutters of the city literally ran with human blood."

"These were things to be remembered, and to exasperate. There was no longer any hope for the people. There was no disposition to temporize or to conciliate. It was submission or death. And the "una salus victis nullam sperare salutem," nerved their arms, and forced them into ardent and continued resistance. They conquered."

"For such distinguished services, Calleja was created Marshal, decorated with the Grand Cross of the order of Charles III., and appointed Viceroy."

CHAPTER II.

THE MONARCHICAL PLAN OF IGUALA—1821.

The Cortes and the Colony.

On the 24th of February, 1821, this celebrated plan was declared. The revolution in Spain had extended its influence to Mexico. The Cortes had compelled King Ferdinand to swear fidelity to the Constitution, and issued decrees to Apodaca, the Viceroy of Mexico, to proclaim it in the Colony, and partially to sequester the property of the Mexican Church.

The Viceroy, a royalist at heart, and an enemy of the revolution, resolved to oppose its progress. The Bishops, the clergy, the native nobility, the Spanish Generals, the wealthy Spaniards, who had been alienated by the acts of the Cortes, united to support Apodaca in a formidable opposition.

THE EMPIRE UNDER ITURBIDE.

Don Augustine Iturbide had long been a bitter enemy of the patriots, and as zealous a defender of the Vice-regal

Government. He was reputed to be clever, bold, and fearless, and not over-scrupulous as to the means for accomplishing his ends. Availing himself of the knowledge he possessed of different parties and interests, he entered into a conspiracy with the Clergy, and such other leaders as could be enlisted in the scheme, to revolutionize the country, and achieve the independence of Mexico.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF MEXICO.

Iturbide, having obtained possession of about half a million of the public treasure, and having secured the co-operation of the higher Clergy to arouse and inflame the people, promulgated the following plan.

It was named after the small town, on the road to Acapulco, from which it emanated. The forces who maintained it were called the "ARMY OF THE THREE GUARANTEES," from the three fundamental principles on their banner—INDEPENDENCE, the MAINTENANCE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, and UNION.

THE PLAN.

ARTICLE 1. The Mexican Nation is independent of the Spanish Nation, and of every other, even on its own continent.

Art. 2. Its religion shall be the Catholic, which all its inhabitants profess.

Art. 3. They shall all be united, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

Art. 4. The government shall be a constitutional monarchy.

Art. 5. A Junta shall be named, consisting of individuals who enjoy the highest reputation in different parties which have shown themselves.

Art. 6. This Junta shall be under the presidency of His Excellency, the Conde del Venadito, the present Viceroy of Mexico.

Art. 7. It shall govern in the name of the nation, according to the laws now in force, and its principal business will be to convoke, according to such rules as it shall deem expedient, a congress for the formation of a constitution more suitable to the country.

Art. 8. His Majesty, Ferdinand VII., shall be invited to the throne of the Empire, and in case of his refusal, the Infantes, Don Carlos and Don Francisco de Paula.

Art. 9. Should his Majesty Ferdinand VII. and his august brothers decline the invitation, the nation is at liberty to invite to the imperial throne any member of reigning families whom it may choose to select.

Art. 10. The formation of the constitution by the congress, and the oath of the emperor to observe it, must precede his entry into the country.

Art. 11. The distinction of castes is abolished, which was made by the Spanish law excluding them from the rights of citizenship. All the inhabitants are citizens and equal, and the door of advancement is open to virtue and merit.

Art. 12. An army shall be formed for the support of RELIGION, INDEPENDENCE, and UNION, guaranteeing these three principles, and therefore shall be called "THE ARMY OF THE THREE GUARANTIES."

Art. 13. It shall solemnly swear to defend the fundamental basis of this plan.

Art. 14. It shall strictly observe the military ordinances now in force.

Art. 15. There shall be no other promotions than

those which are due to seniority, or which are necessary for the good of the service.

Art. 16. The army shall be considered as of the line.

Art. 17. The old partisans of independence who shall adhere to this plan, shall be considered as individuals of this army.

Art. 18. The patriots and peasants who shall adhere to it hereafter, shall be considered as provincial militiamen.

Art. 19. The secular and regular priests shall be continued in the state in which they now are.

Art. 20. All the public functionaries, civil, ecclesiastical, political, and military, who adhere to the cause of independence, shall be continued in their offices, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

Art. 21. Those functionaries, of whatever degree and condition, who dissent from the cause of independence, shall be divested of their offices, and shall quit the territory without taking with them their families and effects.

Art. 22. The military commandants shall regulate themselves according to the general instructions in conformity with this plan, which shall be transmitted to them.

Art. 23. No accused person shall be condemned capitally by the military commandants. Those accused of treason against the nation, which is the next greatest crime after that of treason to the Divine Ruler, shall be conveyed to the Fortress of Barbaras, where they shall remain until congress shall resolve on the punishment that ought to be inflicted on them.

Art. 24. It being indispensable to the country that this plan should be carried into effect, inasmuch as the welfare of that country is its object, every individual of

the army shall maintain it, to the shedding (if it be necessary) of the last drop of his blood.

Town of Iguala, 24th February, 1821.

The design
of the plan.

“The plan of Iguala,” for the independence of Mexico, was inaugurated in the interest of the Church party. Copies of the Articles of Declaration were sent to all the Ecclesiastical Dignitaries of Mexico, to all the Commandants General of the Provinces, and to all Officers of the civil and the military service.

On the 2d of March, *Iturbide*, in submitting his plan to the officers of the army, and receiving the solemn oath of the whole body to maintain it, addressed them as follows:

“Soldiers, you have this day sworn to preserve the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion; to protect the union of Europeans and Americans; to effect the independence of this empire, and, on certain conditions, to obey the king. This act will be applauded by foreign nations; your services will be gratefully acknowledged by your fellow-citizens, and your names will be inscribed in the temple of immortality.”

The revolution
of inde-
pendence.

This great revolution, which sundered the political connection of Mexico with the mother country, was not the work of a day.

“The way had been preparing by the struggles through which the nation had passed from the hour, in 1810, when *Hidalgo* of Dolores had raised the standard of revolt and the cry of Independence.”

But “the great secret of this revolution, so easily and so suddenly achieved at last, and so important in its results, is to be referred to the decree of the Cortes against the property of the Church. *Iturbide* was merely the in-

strument of the exasperated ecclesiastics of the vicerealty, whose vengeance being aroused, were prepared to sacrifice the tranquillity of the country, to repudiate loyalty to their ancient crown, rather than submit to be robbed by the State."

It thus appears, by Articles 1 and 8, that the plan of Iguala contemplated an "Independent Mexican Empire," with a Foreign Monarch, a Spaniard, on the throne.

Independence the universal cry. Iturbide, and the whole party with whom he acted, were monarchists, not republicans. But popular sentiment was so strong in favor of "Independence," that the leaders and parties all around fell in with the movement. "Independence forever" was a rallying cry in which Monarchists and Republicans, Spaniards and Mexicans, "The Church Party" and reformers, all joined in indiscriminating enthusiasm.

The whole force of Iturbide, at first, did not exceed eight hundred men. But the skilful use of the "banner" and the "cry" rallied the broken fragments of old revolutionary forces, and the clergy, the military, and the people were soon, for once, all in accord. But the elements were too incongruous and conflicting to be long in harmony.

The scheme of the Church party. "The Church Party" were content with "Independence" and a monarchy, and a "Bourbon" on the throne. Their prestige and power would be safe. "The Republicans" sought not only "Independence," but a Republican Government. The partisans of Iturbide wished a Mexican, not a Spanish Monarchy, and held the crown in reserve for their leader.

The new Viceroy. At this juncture a new Viceroy arrived, who found it necessary to recognize, in the name of Spain, the "Independence of Mexico." The "Army of the

three Guarantees" entered the Capital in September, 1821, and inaugurated the era of Mexican Independence.

A provisional junta of thirty-six was immediately gathered. They elected a regency of five. Iturbide was President. He was also elected Generalissimo, Lord High Admiral, with a salary of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

THE FIRST INDEPENDENT MEXICAN CONGRESS—1822.

In February, 1822, the first Independent Mexican Congress assembled in the Capital. The heterogeneous elements now began to disclose their irreconcilable character. The Viceroy's recognition of Mexican Independence had reached Spain, and was repudiated by the Cortes. The Bourbon scheme was dead, and the Spanish and the "Church Party" were left to shape their course, as best they could, between the aspirations of the Republicans and the partisans of Iturbide.

The fierce contest. While these two parties were contesting in Congress the claims of republicanism and monarchy, and ecclesiastical, political, military, and financial interests were all mingling in the revolutionary caldron, the partisans of Iturbide, an unorganized band of soldiers and of the populace, gathered before the palace of Iturbide, and with shouts proclaimed him Emperor, as AUGUSTIN I.

The new sensation. The idea of an independent nation, a Mexican monarchy, and a native sovereign, was like a clarion call re-echoed everywhere. Congress could but approve the extempore coronation of the people. The rapid strides of Iturbide, a private, a Colonel, a Lord-High Admiral, Emperor, were too much for his equanimity. He claimed an exercise of arbitrary, imperial power, which

Congress resisted. "He demanded a veto upon all articles of the Constitution then under discussion, and the right of appointing and removing at pleasure the members of the supreme tribunal of justice. He recommended the establishment of a military tribunal in the Capital, with powers little inferior to those exercised by the Spanish commandants during the revolution." Congress rejected these proposals. The Emperor thereupon, Aug. 26, 1822, arrested fourteen of the recalcitrant deputies.

Usurpation of the Emperor. This high-handed measure so incensed the representatives of the people, that any further cooperation between congress and the sovereign was impossible.

The Emperor therefore dissolved "his parliament," and sent them home. He created a new constituent junta of forty-five persons, selected by himself, who were of easy purpose to execute his will.

The people, who had expected a constitutional monarchy, did not accept these usurpations, so like Old European despotism, and universal dissatisfaction spread almost as rapidly as the enthusiasm at the erection of the throne.

The Revolt. The northern provinces declared against the usurper. Santa Anna, Governor of Vera Cruz, joined the dissidents. Iturbide sent General Echavarri to crush the opposition and the Governor at Vera Cruz. Echavarri joined the revolt. Gaudalupe Victoria, the patriot hero, whom Iturbide could neither seduce nor subdue, had fled to the fastnesses of the mountains during the imperial regime. He came down like a lion from his lair, and joined Santa Anna.

A Convention. In February, 1823, a convention was signed, called "The Act of Casa Mata," which pledged

the re-establishment of the National Representative Assembly, which the Emperor had dispersed.

The Patriots in Council. "The Marques, Vibanco, Guerrero, Bravo, and Negrete, in various sections of the nation, joined the popular movement which was sweeping the country. Iturbide found his error too late. In March, 1823, he offered his abdication to the old Congress. Its re-collected members, however, refused any recognition of his right to a crown, even so much as by the acceptance of his abdication. Nevertheless, with a magnanimity which would not ignore his services in securing the independence of his country, they allowed his departure from Mexico, endowed him with an income of *twenty-four thousand* dollars a year, and placed at his disposal a vessel to bear himself and family to Leghorn in Italy.

Aid of the British flag. In July, 1824, a vessel under British colors reached the Mexican coast, near the mouth of the river Santander. The next day a gentleman appeared, announcing himself as a Polish visitor, who, with a friend, had come to purchase land in that district, with a view to establishing a colony.

General Garza, in command, gave free permission to enter the country. Suspicion was excited in regard to the two strangers; and on the removal of disguise, the Emperor Iturbide appeared before the general, as the Polander's friend. The Ex-Emperor was secured as a prisoner, and delivered to the authorities of Tamaulipas. The State Legislature, then in session, promptly resolved to execute a decree of Congress of the preceding April, and condemned the royal exile to death. He was shot.

The end of Iturbide. Thus ended the usurpations and the reign of Iturbide. Sad was his fate. But whatever sympathy was felt for him was much abated by a record,

in his own handwriting, that on Good Friday, 1814, "in honor of the day, he had just ordered three hundred excommunicated wretches to be shot!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CONGRESS AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1824.

The restoration of Congress. AFTER the fall of Iturbide, Generals Victoria, Bravo, and Negrete entered the Capital the same month. The old Congress was quickly re-assembled. They appointed the three victorious generals a provisional triumvirate, to exercise supreme executive powers until the assembling of the new Congress in the following August.

This Congress, in October, 1824, adopted the Federal Constitution,* which, surviving all the revolutions and reforms of twenty-three years, was in substance re-adopted in 1857.

The tie sundered. The war of Independence only sundered the connection between Mexico and Spain. The herculean work of the colonists was, to construct a system of government for themselves, and out of the chaos of Spanish oppression and misrule, to bring forth order, system, and law.

THE FIRST REALLY NATIONAL CONSTITUTION—1824.

On the 4th of October, 1824, a National Representative body, assembled for the purpose, formed and proclaimed

* The Appendix contains the draft of this Constitution, as submitted to the Congress; and it exhibits the manner and spirit of the transaction of the business, and the purposes and aims of the nation. This project with some amendments was adopted, and formed the basis of the Constitution of 1857. P.

ed a Constitution, by which the sixteen original States were united in a *Federal Republic*.

The first Congress.

On the 1st of January, 1825, the first Congress under this Constitution assembled in the City of Mexico, and General Victoria was installed as President of the Republic. The Constitution by General Morelos, in 1814, was adopted only by the section of country under his control. This of 1824, was the first well-matured and symmetrical constitution of Mexico. It was accepted by the whole country, and formed the basis of that perfected democratic Republican Constitution of 1857, which has become the great organic law of the land.

This Constitution of 1824 was far from meeting the exigencies of the case, or the indispensable requisites of Republican Institutions. The people were not yet educated in the true ideas of freedom, and the clerical party wielded a power that compassed their private ends.

Article 50 provided for a concordat with the Holy See, which was to throw the whole of the Mexican church management into the hands of the Roman Pontiff. The clergy contrived to exempt themselves entirely from any chance of Government control over their property and monopolies. All the bishoprics, deaneries, and chapters could be filled by old Spaniards only. The Creoles and mixed races were eligible only to the lower orders of church offices. Church privilege and caste disabilities still wrought together, to perpetuate the despotism and the curse of Mexico.

Essential elements of the history.

The limits of this work forbid a minute detail of all the revolutions and counter-revolutions which have marked the struggles of the Republicans. Nor is it necessary, to understand the conflict. The elements of the two great national parties, though in the main dis-