

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-

tinct and irreconcilable, were often somewhat mixed and confused in their action. The line of demarcation fluctuated at times, from side to side, attaching now to one party, and now to the other, individuals and interests of varying and vacillating influence. Nevertheless, the great fundamental, distinguishing principles of the two parties are clearly traceable from their origin, down through all the successive steps and stages of development, to the final result.

Power of the Clergy. It is not surprising that that Priestly organization wielding the ecclesiastical, political, civil, military, and monetary powers of the whole country, and backed by all the influence that could be brought to bear to sustain it from the old world, should be able to sow dissensions, foment counter-revolutions, suborn the feeble, dependent, ambitious, and in a thousand ways embarrass and thwart the plans and aims of the Republicans, feeble in everything but their principles and the justice of their cause.

The number of presidents, dictators, pronunciamientos, revolutions, reactionary movements, and Bull-run defeats in Mexico, so far from alienating our sympathies and confidence from the Mexican patriots, should only make us the more appreciate the difficulties of their terrible struggles, and honor their indomitable perseverance and patriotism.

We pass to another suggestive act in the drama.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSPIRACY—THE CHURCH PARTY WITH PAREDES, TO OVERTHROW THE REPUBLIC, ERECT A MONARCHY, AND INVITE A FOREIGN PRINCE TO THE THRONE—1845.

"The Church Party" and Paredes. IN December, 1845, General Paredes, who had been placed in command of the army at San Luis Potosi, by the Republican President Herrera, pronounced against him. The Archbishop, several of the Bishops of the highest rank, military officers, and the monarchical interest generally, combined for the avowed purpose of crushing forever the republican system. The Archbishop openly avowed his determination to support a revolution, and declared that a monarchical Government was more in accordance with church principles, and better adapted to Mexico. Aided by the clergy and the army, Paredes succeeded. This new party, more formidable for its material than for its numbers, boldly pushed the scheme. Paredes, thus sustained, assumed the power of a hereditary Sovereign, completely subverted the constitution of 1824, substituted a new and totally different form of Government in its place, and by a decree, known as the "Law of Convocation," disfranchised the great body of the people, and deprived them of the right of sending deputies to the National Legislature.

"The Church" against the People. Great dissatisfaction and indignation spread throughout the country, at this violation of popular rights. The only protection of the masses against an irresponsible executive was taken away. Their future was to be, despotic rule, "absolute, and unlimited by precedent, law, or the will of the people."

A Bourbon to be called to the Throne. The Chamber of Deputies, under the new organization, was composed of individuals of the