

ciples. Those who effected it, raising their views to higher objects, aimed at the entire destruction of the organization of society. Utterly regardless of the character, the customs, and even the views of the nation, they sought, without respect to the length of time which has elapsed since our independence was achieved, to reestablish anew, in Mexico, a form of government for which we have not among us any of the bases, on which it rests in Europe.

The faction which entertained this design unfortunately found the most complete support in the Government of January, under whose protection it displayed its banner, and without any reserve began to unfold and sustain monarchical principles, blasting with vile calumnies our public men, bringing our affairs into contempt by means of misrepresentation or ridicule, and drawing from the past, as thus exhibited, the conclusion that the evils of the country arise from the Republican system, and that the only remedy for them consists in the measure which they dared to propose,—*the erection of a throne for a foreigner*. As an effective means of attaining this end, it dictated the summons for a Congress which should represent what is called the aristocracy, and from whose bosom the *people* were rejected with disdain and insult, as born, in the opinion of this faction, only to obey.

In vain did the Cabinet, attempt, by its measures on the 3d of August, to oppose a dyke to the torrent of public opinion, which was already overflowing its banks, to overwhelm this oligarchical administration.

MEXICO, August 6th, 1846.

On the morning of the 4th, the Citadel passed the sentence of death upon this system, and two days sufficed to overthrow it.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESTORATION OF THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS, AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION—1846.

The Congress
of Dec. 1846.

ON the 6th of December, 1846, in conformity with the proclamation of the provisional Government, and in pursuance of the electoral law of 1824, the new Sovereign Constituent Congress of the Nation assembled in the Capital. The whole country substantially had given in its adhesion to the new Government. Santa Anna had returned from exile. In his reply to the Minister of War, September 14, 1846, he acknowledged the "decree of the Supreme Government, embracing a programme for the due celebration of the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1824," the assumption by "himself" of the Supreme Executive Power, on the anniversary of the "glorious cry of Dolores."

Professions of
Santa Anna.

He added, "My satisfaction is extreme to observe the enthusiasm with which preparations are made to celebrate the two great blessings which have fallen upon this nation,—her independence and her liberty,—and I am penetrated with the deepest gratitude to find that my arrival at the Capital will be made to contribute to the solemnities of so great an occasion. I shall make my entrée into that city to-morrow at mid-day, and desire, in contributing my share to the National Jubilee, to observe such a course as may best accord with my duties to my country,—beloved of my heart,—and with the due respect to the sovereign will of the people.

"I have been called by the voice of my fellow-citizens to exercise the office of Commander-in-chief of the Army of the Republic." "I now see a terrible contest with a perfidious and daring enemy, in which the Mexican Republic

must re-conquer the insignia of her glory, and a fortunate issue, if victorious; or disappear from the face of the earth, if so unfortunate as to be defeated."

"I also see a treacherous faction raising its head from her bosom, which is calling up a form of Government detested by the united nation, proposing as preferable submission to a foreign dominion. And I behold at last, that after much vacillation, that nation has resolved to establish her right to act for herself, and to arrange such a form of Government as best suits her wishes."

"Your Excellency will at once perceive how great an error I should commit, in assuming the Supreme Magistracy, when my duty calls me to the field to fight against the enemies of the Republic. I should disgrace myself if, when called to the post of danger, I should spring to that of power."

"The elections for Members of Congress to form the Constitution which the people wish to adopt are proceeding. That Congress will now soon convene, and while I shall be engaged in the conflict, in armed defence of her independence, the nation will place such safeguards around her liberties as may best suit herself."

The first and all-absorbing business of the Congress and the crisis was, to procure resources to carry on the government, and continue the war then pending with the United States. The conflict between the Government and the "Clergy" has already been alluded to in the sketch of Juarez.

DON VALENTIN GOMEZ FARIAS.

"Citizen Valentin Gomez Farias, one of the earliest, most constant, and honored liberal republicans, occupied the Presidential chair. He brought forward, as the only

means of supplying the indispensable necessities of the nation, the celebrated law for the loan of fourteen millions of dollars, to be raised upon the property of the clergy; and in the event of the impossibility of the negotiation, then the sale of said property until the requisite amount should be raised.

"There were three parties in the Congress: 1. That of the 'old regime,' the clerical and monarchical interests, a small minority. 2. The radical republican party, Rejon, Ramirez and Juarez as their leaders. 3. The moderates, who were strongly represented, and headed by Otero.

"The monarchists and the moderates attacked the law. The Republicans sustained it. After a masterly and brilliant discussion, long to be remembered in the annals of Mexico, the bill passed by a small majority. The power and eloquence with which Rejon, Ramirez, and Juarez supported the measure, it has been said, would have attracted universal attention, had not the echoes of their thrilling, patriotic appeals been silenced by the thunders of foreign guns reverberating along the shores of the gulf and the Pacific."

Protest of the Vicar-General. During the discussion, the Vicar-general of Mexico sent in a protest against the bill, which was read to the Chambers. But the measure was deemed just, and indispensable to the salvation of the Republic. The decree was approved by the President, and was promulgated the following day.

In three days, the Archbishop's chapter issued a formal protest against the law, as violating the fundamental principles of the church, and the decisions of the Council of Trent.

"The opposition of the church party extended throughout the country. The priesthood denounced the govern-

ment, as favoring the cause of the enemies of the faith. In the cities and large towns, where religious establishments and ecclesiastics existed in great numbers, the excitement and opposition were violent. The protest of the Archbishop's chapter was followed by others from Puebla, Queretaro, and other States, the clergy using everywhere all the arts known to them, to stir the popular mind against Farias and the Government. In 1835, when he supported a similar measure, the hatred and instigations of the clergy compelled him to fly for his life."

Power of the Priesthood over the People. The passions and resistance excited by the clergy made it impossible to execute the law. The officers charged with the duty were assailed by the multitude. By priestly domination they were led to believe, that an Archbishop and ten Bishops, two hundred Cathedral Dignitaries, five thousand Priests and Fathers of all orders, and perhaps five thousand more inmates of convents, nunneries, and religious houses, enjoying the accumulated ecclesiastical acquisitions of three hundred years, to the amount of more than *three hundred millions* of the most valuable property of the nation, a large portion of its available wealth—who held all its offices of honor and of trust—who had controlled all its measures of domestic administration and of foreign policy in all things, temporal and spiritual—who were living in luxury and ease, should be exempt from bearing any share in the pecuniary burdens of the State. It was sacrilege to tax a Priest. It was piety and patriotism in the masses to support both Church and State.

Anathemas. All the penalties of the inquisition, except the fagot and the stake, were denounced against the Government and its executive officers, and all who should participate in the purchase or sale of the estates of the Church. There were no buyers.

The same scenes enacted in England in the reign of King John were repeated here.

Ecclesiastical weapons. Not content with this opposition, the clergy wielded, with all its well-known effect, that subtle, insidious weapon, spiritual power, which appalls the minds of an unenlightened population. The cathedrals and churches were closed; the altars robed in mourning; no mass, no swinging censer of incense, no prayer, no benediction, no marriage rite nor baptism, no sacrament except for the sick and the dying, and no mass for the souls of the dead.

Popular effect. The accompaniments of such a state of things—of the priestly game on the one hand, and popular impressions on the other, can be more easily imagined than described. Multitudes cursed the Government. Public journals in the interest of the clergy, openly counselled rebellion against the Executive and the Congress, in order to defeat "the sacrilegious attempt to despoil the Ministers of Heaven of their sacred wealth."

Indomitable firmness of Farias. President Farias, with a firmness and devotion to the principle of "equality before the law," that entitles him to the everlasting gratitude of those who mean to live and die to establish "human rights," was neither intimidated nor deterred from his course by the denunciations of the priests, or the threats of their deluded people.

The Clerical Revolution. But the clergy were indefatigable. They sowed dissensions among the people, the soldiery, and the government, until the city was ripe for the result, when Don Matias Pena y Barrigan, a monarchist and an ally of the clergy, headed an insurrection, and issued his pronunciamento against the Federal system and Gomez Farias.

This act in the Mexican drama closed by the return

of Santa Anna to the Capital, under a compromise with the clerical and monarchical party, who had so long before announced their purpose to erect a monarchy, and invite a Foreign Prince to the throne! the same party that subsequently, in 1863, welcomed the foreign invaders at Puebla, with all the pomp the Mexican Hierachy could display.

Defection of Santa Anna. Santa Anna, whose professions and oath we have above recorded, on the 24th of March, 1847, accepted a welcome from those whom, six months before, he pronounced enemies of his country, and is inaugurated their President with all the honors—a Mass and Te Deum in the Cathedral.

English view of Santa Anna. The London Chronicle of June 15, 1847, said of this event, "This is the third time Santa Anna has held in his hand the destinies of his country, and three times he has shown himself unequal to the task. The events of the year 1847 have been but a repetition of those of 1835 and 1841; at each of the three periods he has brought ruin upon Mexico, and his fall will now, it is to be hoped, prove irretrievable."

During his Dictatorship, he abolished the Institute of Sciences in Oajaca, for its liberal principles, and on July 1, 1854, he commissioned Señor Gutierrez Estrada "to negotiate in Europe for the establishment of a Monarchy in Mexico," with powers as follows:

"I confer upon him, by these presents, the full powers necessary to enter into arrangements and make the proper offers at the Courts of London, Paris, Madrid, and Vienna, to obtain from those Governments, or from any one of them, the establishment of a Monarchy, derived from any of the Royal Races of those powers, under qualifications and conditions to be established by special instructions."

PART VII.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESSIVE STEPS TOWARDS THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC.

The three stages of the Revolution. THE Mexican Revolution, as a whole, involved three great events or proceedings: 1. The throwing off the *yoke of Spain*, and the maintenance of an independent organic existence. 2. The overthrow of the ecclesiastical system *at home*, which like the pall of Egypt overshadowed the whole land. 3. The construction of a new government, on principles in harmony with the "rights of man," and the spirit of modern civilization. The latter implied a complete reconstruction of society in all the domain of government, of religious institutions, and of the entire fabric of civil, social, and educational life.

The first Congress. After the first really national Congress, and the Constitution of 1824, the work of reorganization was embarrassed and hampered by the perpetual opposition of the Church party. They left no measures untried to defeat the designs and efforts of the Republican party to establish order and law, under the protection of a free Constitutional government. And yet every outbreak and every outrage was overruled for the furtherance of both civil and religious freedom, on broader and firmer foundations. Every step in the way, every attempted re-