

know that this is the line of battle which I have marked out for them, and that from this day forth the unjust enemies of Mexicans may not dare to tread with unclean feet upon our soil. . . . Let all Mexicans, forgetting my political errors, not deny me the sole title which I desire to leave my children: that of a good *Mexican*."¹

Santa Anna's life was really in no sort of danger, but this pathetic appeal to his countrymen exactly suited their taste, and from this time forward his political position was even stronger than it had been before his unlucky expedition to Texas.

¹C. M. Bustamante, *Gabinete Mexicano*, I, 143.

CHAPTER XVIII

SANTA ANNA ONCE MORE

THE capture of San Juan de Ulúa and the disarming of the fortifications of the city of Vera Cruz left the contending parties at a dead-lock. The French were not in sufficient force to attempt an expedition into the country, and the Mexican government was powerless to attack the French ships. Santa Anna's command, therefore, abandoned Vera Cruz and encamped a few miles outside the city, while Baudin stationed some of his smaller vessels in the harbor of Vera Cruz itself, thus holding the city entirely at his mercy. The Mexican government, however, did not dare to enter into negotiations for peace, as opinion both in Congress and out was still very much inflamed; and if it had been known that the administration was negotiating with the French, the result would probably have been an immediate revolution, that would have driven Bustamante from power.

The solution of the difficulty came through the mediation of the British minister in Mexico, who returned from a leave of absence rather unexpectedly, accompanied by the entire British West India squadron. As this squadron had with it two seventy-four-gun line-of-battle ships, it was greatly superior to Baudin's division, and the French admiral judiciously refused to accept the mediation of the British minister in the presence of a superior naval force. Mr. Pakenham, the British minister, saw the full force of this objection, and sent the two line-of-battle ships back to Jamaica, but kept the rest of the ships near Vera Cruz, as he had business of his own with the Mexican government.

For two months Pakenham, with great tact, negotiated with the Mexican government, and finally persuaded them to send representatives to Vera Cruz to treat with the French

admiral. The administration itself was quite willing from the first to make peace on the French terms, because the blockade of the Gulf ports had cut off almost all the principal sources of revenue, and without money the government could not be carried on. Moreover, Baudin had not merely cut off the supplies, but had entered into relations with the Federalist insurgents at Tampico, and had left that part of the coast open to foreign commerce. The trade of Tampico flourished in consequence, and a large amount of money was received at the custom-house—all of which went into the treasury of the insurgents. The result of the blockade, therefore, was twofold. It impoverished the government while it enriched the insurgents. But the voice of Congress and the newspapers was still for war, and it was only by degrees that they could be persuaded that the national honor did not require any longer keeping up a hostile attitude.

The representatives sent to Vera Cruz by the Mexican government were Gorostiza, who was then Secretary of Foreign Relations, and the ex-President Victoria; and Pakenham went with them. Their task was a very easy one, for they had only to consent to the French demands. Baudin made some unimportant concessions, principally in matters of form, and two papers, one a treaty of peace and the other a convention for the payment of the indemnity of six hundred thousand dollars, were signed on March 9, 1839.¹

The next question was whether the treaties would be ratified by Congress, which, according to the terms of the agreement had to be done within twelve days. After considerable and heated discussion the government was sustained by a vote of twenty-seven to twelve in the Chamber of Deputies, on March 19, 1839, and on the following day by the Senate, three members voting in the negative. This result seems to have been due in considerable measure to the influence of Santa Anna, who had arrived in the city of Mexico on February 17.²

¹ See Spanish text in Dublan y Lozano, III, 617-619.

² The negotiations and debates above referred to will be found in Bustamante, *Gabinete Mexicano*, I, 163-177; see also Blanchard et Dauzats, 482-501.

Shortly after the settlement of the Mexican difficulties with the French, Pakenham was able to get from the Mexican government the long-delayed sanction required for the adjustment of the claims of the British holders of Mexican bonds—a matter which then had been long pending, and which might not have been carried through at all but for the lesson of San Juan de Ulúa, and the very significant hint afforded by the visit of a powerful British squadron. The details of this negotiation may be briefly stated.

It will be recalled that two loans had originally been made in London by the Mexican government, one through Goldschmidt & Co., in October, 1823, and another through Barclay, Herring, Richardson & Co., in February, 1825, amounting in all to thirty-two million dollars. Interest upon these issues was paid up to July 1, 1827, and then stopped.

By an act of Congress of October 2, 1830,¹ it was determined to capitalize all of the unpaid interest up to April 1, 1831, and one-half of the interest that would fall due from 1831 to 1836, by issuing five per cent bonds at sixty-two and one-half for the unpaid interest on the five per cent loan; and by issuing six per cent bonds at seventy-five for the unpaid interest on the six per cent loan. In accordance with this authority, Gorostiza, at that time the Mexican minister in London, made a refunding agreement with Messrs. Baring Brothers & Co., which was subsequently approved by the bond-holders. This arrangement required the issuance of new bonds, amounting in all to seven million five hundred thousand dollars. The Mexican government duly issued the refunding bonds of 1830, and paid so much of the interest as fell due under the agreement up to and including July, 1832; but it paid nothing for the years 1833, 1834, 1835, and 1836.

Early in 1837 the Mexican government, under the authority of an act of April 4, 1837, offered the bond-holders to convert one-half of their holdings into new consolidated fund bonds, and to pay the other half by "inscriptions," or certificates, giving the right to locate vacant land in the

¹ Dublan y Lozano, II, 289.

departments of Texas, Chihuahua, New Mexico, Sonora, and California.¹

The Mexican proposal was disapproved by the bondholders, but a counter proposition was made on their behalf, which was accepted by the Mexican representatives in London, and an agreement to carry it into effect was signed on September 14, 1837.² The substance of this arrangement was that instead of "inscriptions" for land, "deferred bonds," bearing no interest for ten years, were to be issued to the bondholders for half their holdings; that at any time during the ten years the holders of such deferred bonds might at their option receive land in payment for the bonds, upon certain terms; and that bonds not so exchanged for land during the ten years would become interest-bearing, and receive five per cent from and after October 1, 1847.

This arrangement, however, was disapproved by the Mexican government, apparently on the ground that the act of Congress of April 4 did not confer sufficient authority; and therefore, when Congress met in January, 1838, the government submitted a bill to grant the necessary authority which concluded with the following provision: "The Executive is authorized to take into consideration the proposal heretofore made by the holders of the Mexican bonds or any new propositions which may be submitted, and to agree with the bondholders in such manner as may best combine and insure the interests of both parties."³

When this measure was introduced in Congress at the beginning of the year 1838, the administration of Bustamante was engaged in controversies with both France and the United States over the claims of their citizens. The Mexican Congress was in a very uncompromising mood, so far at least as paying creditors was concerned, and the proposal to give the administration full discretionary authority to settle with the English bondholders met with such opposition that nothing whatever was done toward disposing of

¹ See the text of this proposal in Murphy, *Memoria sobre la Deuda Exterior*, 141; Dublan y Lozano, III, 359-361.

² Murphy, 144-147.

³ *Ibid.*, 10.

the matter during the year 1838. But by the early part of 1839, after the fall of San Juan de Ulúa, Congress was in a much more yielding temper. On June 1 of that year, under Pakenham's persuasions, a law was passed approving the agreement made in London on September 14, 1837, and giving the government authority to carry out the details.¹ This was the price of British mediation.

The principle of an adjustment with the British bondholders had thus at last been agreed upon; but the accumulation of unpaid interest in the meantime caused fresh complications. A new act of Congress was required, which was not passed until August 3, 1841, and thereupon a modification of the agreement was finally adopted in London, February 10, 1842, and ratified at a bondholders' meeting.² The total funded debt under this agreement amounted to very nearly fifty million dollars (£9,247,944.2.3, with interest from October 1, 1837).

In the early spring of 1839, the American claims having been got out of the way by the acceptance of the proposal for arbitration, and the English and French questions being in a fair way of settlement, the Mexican government felt that it was at last strong enough to devote attention to certain serious and urgent domestic questions, the chief of which was the Federalist rising in the northeastern part of the country. Matters had become worse since Urrea came east in 1838. In the winter of 1839 the garrison of Monclova had pronounced for federalism; and in the spring, Matamoros, Monterey (Nuevo Leon), and Saltillo fell into the hands of the insurgents.

Santa Anna urged Bustamante to assume command in person of the government troops, which the latter was quite willing to undertake in the hope of acquiring on his own part some military laurels, though he hesitated at leaving Santa Anna behind him in the capital. But finally he was persuaded to do even that. The constitutional laws provided that in the absence of the President from the city of Mexico

¹ Murphy, 147; Dublan y Lozano, III, 624, 646.

² Murphy, 152-155; Dublan y Lozano, IV, 29.

his duties should be devolved upon the president of the council, who, at the time, was Nicolas Bravo. Bravo, however, consented to step aside in favor of Santa Anna, and gave the usual excuse that his health would not permit him to undertake the duty. It was thereupon declared by a decree of the so-called Supreme Conservative Power, that in view of the inability of General Bravo to act, and in view of the unanimous wish of Congress, and the confidence manifested by all Mexicans in General Santa Anna by reason of his late deeds and his patriotic determination in the war against France, he should take charge of the government during the President's absence. On March 18, therefore, Santa Anna took over the government, and on the evening of that day the President set out for Tampico.¹

Unfortunately for Bustamante's hopes and ambitions, his attempt to acquire a military reputation was unsuccessful; and it was Santa Anna who again gained all the glory, and who raised himself higher than ever in the estimation of his countrymen. Bustamante's very leisurely advance afforded the Tampico insurgents an excellent opportunity of slipping in between his column and the city of Mexico. The moment this plan was developed Santa Anna, with his customary energy, managed to concentrate a considerable force at Puebla, which met the insurgents and totally defeated them at Acajete, on May 3, 1839. Urrea, who commanded the federal force, managed to escape; but Mejía—the same man who had sailed to Texas and fraternized with the colonists in 1832, and who had led the fatal expedition from New Orleans to Tampico in 1835—was captured and duly shot. It was said, very likely on insufficient authority, that Santa Anna after the battle sent Mejía a message that he was to be put to death in half an hour. "He is very kind," was the alleged reply, "but if I had taken him, I would have shot him inside of five minutes." Such were the amenities between old friends in Mexican politics.

Early in June, 1839, Tampico surrendered, and Urrea again escaped; but he was captured soon after and con-

¹ Dublin y Lozano, III, 581; Bustamante, *Gabinete Mexicano*, I, 176.

financial and political power of the church in Mexico, secured the support of a great majority of the Mexican voters; but during the ten or fifteen years after 1836, public opinion had not reached a point where it was ready to sustain any real or thorough-going effort to deal with ecclesiastical abuses.

The army had no invested wealth to preserve, but it had a great interest in keeping up its special privileges, and in the payment of the large sums disbursed in salaries to its officers. The officers were almost all white men, and the preservation of the power and privileges of their class was the one thing which united them; and indeed what chiefly made the army a curse to Mexico was the fact that by an unbroken tradition nearly all the most lucrative places in the government, from the presidency down, were within the reach of ambitious and popular officers. As the business of every officer of high rank was, therefore, politics, so the business of every party was to keep the army satisfied; and just in proportion to the skill and success of an administration in distributing good places among the other party generals was their success in keeping high office and wealth for themselves. No number of offices could, however, have satisfied the insatiable demands of the army, and hence the perpetual series of mutinies, whose real objects, whatever popular cry might be used as a pretext, always were to put one set of men in and to turn another set out.

The rank and file of the army had very little to say about such matters. They were badly fed, badly armed, badly clothed, and rarely paid. They were compelled to endure all sorts of privations, which they sustained without a murmur, and if they were not very effective in battle, they were astonishingly good upon the march. The patient and ignorant Indians in the ranks knew no more of public affairs than their relatives who tilled the fields, worked the mines, and performed the manual labor of the country, for the number of people in Mexico who took any interest in public affairs or exerted the smallest influence was always extremely limited. Indeed, the law permitted few of the people even

to vote. Under the constitutional laws of 1836 no one was entitled to the suffrage unless he had an income of at least one hundred dollars a year, "proceeding from real or personal property, or from trade or honest personal labor useful to society"; and domestic servants, vagabonds, and persons having no trade or honest means of livelihood were specially excluded.¹

In a large sense the office-holders, actual or potential, ruled Mexico. In so poor a country there were few other means for men of education to get a living than by holding office, either in the church or under the government. The legal and medical professions, and to a certain extent wholesale trade, offered a career, but the most coveted openings for a young man of education were still in Mexico what they had been in the eighteenth century in Spain, where the *pretendientes* had for years furnished Spanish literature with a constant subject for ridicule.

Madrid under the Bourbon Kings had been the general meeting-place of all the office-seekers of the kingdom. The clergy came to solicit benefices and bishoprics, the officers of the army and navy came to beg for promotion, and civilians came to find employment under one branch or the other of the government. As their purses were in general very ill furnished, the caricatures of the day exhibited them leading a wretched life and constantly at odds with their landlords, by whom they were fleeced and whom they principally supported. In reality, they were so troublesome to the police that from time to time the authorities would make a clean sweep of them and a decree of the Council of Castile would banish the whole herd of office-seekers from Madrid; but when they were driven out of one gate these insatiable beggars would enter by another.²

There was, however, this important difference in practice between Spain and Mexico. In eighteenth-century Spain offices and promotions were distributed in accord-

¹ Dublan y Lozano, III, 123, 232.

² Desdevizes du Dezert, *L'Espagne de l'Ancien Régime (La Société)*, 171, Introd., xxv; Doblado, *Letters from Spain*, 361-376.

ance with the uncertain whims of the court. In Mexico during the first half of the nineteenth century they were usually obtained through the success of a mutiny. If the mutiny failed, then the holders of the offices remained in possession undisturbed.

The operation of all these influences upon the destinies of Mexico was very fully and clearly exhibited in the disturbances which broke out in the capital during the summer of 1840. Gómez Farias, who had been elected Vice-President under Santa Anna eight years before, and had lately been living in New Orleans, had returned, and his irrepressible activities in favor of radical reforms had led to his arrest and imprisonment. With him General Urrea also was confined in the old prison of the Inquisition. At dawn on the fifteenth of July, 1840, they were both released by two mutinous battalions; and at the head of these troops, with a cheering mob at their heels, they surprised President Bustamante in the palace of the government, and proclaimed the re-establishment of the federal system and the Constitution of 1824. For ten days the city of Mexico was the scene of a sort of continuous warfare—the government troops holding the citadel, the insurgents holding the cathedral, the palace, and the central part of the city.¹

The wife of the Spanish minister was an interested observer, and left a full and illuminating account of the aspect of the city in the time of this revolution.

"The tranquillity of the sovereign people," she wrote, "during all this period, is astonishing. In what other city in the world would they not have taken part with one or other side? Shops shut, workmen out of employment, thousands of idle people, subsisting. Heaven only knows how, yet no riot, no confusion, apparently no impatience. Groups of people collect on the streets, or stand talking before their doors, and speculate upon probabilities, but await the decision of their military chiefs, as if it were a judgment from Heaven, from which it were both useless and impious to appeal."

¹ Conditions were reversed in 1912, the insurgents under Félix Díaz then holding the citadel, and the Maderist government the palace and the cathedral; but the essential features of the contest were much the same as in 1840, though the use of modern weapons increased the chances of injury.

The "military chiefs" did not, in her opinion, show themselves very efficient. Urrea and his men took possession of the towers of the cathedral and some of the highest edifices in the centre of the city, and fired indiscriminately in all directions. The government troops, instead of attacking the insurgents in the palace, were firing through peaceful streets in quite another direction.

"Both parties," writes Madame Calderon, "seem to be *fighting the city* instead of each other; and this manner of firing from behind parapets, and from the tops of houses and steeples, is decidedly safer for the soldiers than for the inhabitants. It seems also a novel plan to keep up a continual cannonading by night, and to rest during a great part of the day. One would think that were the guns brought near the palace, the affair would be sooner over."¹

This desultory burning of gunpowder might indeed have gone on for a long time without much damage to any except non-combatants, but the leaders on both sides learned that the government troops in the country districts would remain loyal, and that a strong force under Santa Anna was approaching the capital. Bustamante, however, was evidently in quite as much danger from these advancing supporters as he was from the followers of Farias and Urrea, and therefore, in order that Santa Anna might not get the credit of restoring order, an arrangement was arrived at on July 26, 1840, by which peace was made and the insurgents were pardoned and left in full possession of all their property and their offices under the government.

For some months longer the government of Bustamante struggled on against constantly increasing financial difficulties and general discontent. At length, in August, 1841, an unexpected and formidable revolt broke out at Guadalajara (a long way from Manga de Clavo), under the lead of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga, who issued a pronunciamiento denouncing the incapacity of the government, demanding the convocation of a constituent Congress to

¹ Calderon, 182-204. For other accounts by eye-witnesses, see Treat to Lamar, July 23, 1840; Wright to Bee, July 27, 1840; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 670-674, 677-683.

reform the constitutional laws of 1836, and urging the transfer of the executive powers, in the meantime, to "a citizen worthy of confidence." That citizen, of course, was Santa Anna.

Paredes, who thus assumed rather suddenly a conspicuous position in the shifting scenes of Mexican politics, had been, like Bustamante and Santa Anna, an officer in the Spanish army. Like them, he had joined Iturbide, and had gradually risen to be a general of division. It was he who had defeated Urrea and the Federalists at Mazatlan in 1838, and he had been looked upon as a loyal supporter of the government. An American author, writing of him a few years later, said that he was "a man of talents and acquirements in his profession, and all speak of him as a gentleman and a patriot."¹

Within two months from the time Paredes pronounced, the overthrow of Bustamante was complete. The troops in one town after another, including Santa Anna and his followers in the state of Vera Cruz, joined the movement and marched on the city of Mexico. On the thirty-first of August a large part of the troops in the capital mutinied under the lead of General Valencia, and the usual sort of street fighting followed.

Madame Calderon describes the aspect of the city on the second of September, 1841, as follows:

"Mexico looks as if it had got a general holiday. Shops shut up, and all business is at a stand. The people, with the utmost apathy, are collected in groups, talking quietly; the officers are galloping about; generals, in a somewhat party-coloured dress, with large gray hats, striped pantaloons, old coats, and generals' belts, fine horses, and crimson-coloured velvet saddles. The shopkeepers in the square have been removing their goods and money. An occasional shot is heard, and sometimes a volley, succeeded by a dead silence."

Three days later she noted that every turret and belfry was covered with soldiers and the streets blocked up by trenches, the soldiers firing at each other, but as a rule hitting nobody but peaceful citizens.

¹ Thompson, *Recollections of Mexico*, 85.

"The war of July," she writes, "had at least a shadow of pretext; it was a war of party, and those who wished to re-establish federalism may have acted with good faith. Now there is neither principle, nor pretext, nor plan, nor the shadow of reason or legality. Disloyalty, hypocrisy, and the most sordid calculation, are all the motives that can be discovered; and those who then affected an ardent desire for the welfare of their country have now thrown aside their masks, and appear in their true colours; and the great mass of the people, who, thus passive and oppressed, allow their quiet homes to be invaded, are kept in awe neither by the force of arms, nor by the depth of the views of the conspirators, but by a handful of soldiers, who are themselves scarcely aware of their own wishes or intentions, but that they desire power and distinction at any price."¹

By the end of September, Bustamante was still in possession of the city, but Santa Anna, at the head of a considerable army, was in possession of Tacubaya; and from that suburb, on September 28, 1841, the principal officers of his army issued a paper which was called the *Bases of Tacubaya*, and which became, in effect, the Constitution of the country for the next three years.² After reciting that the immense majority of Mexicans did not wish, and would not consent to, a continuance in office of the men who had controlled their destinies since the year 1836, and that it was necessary to establish some temporary authority until a special congress could meet and adopt freely and after full discussion new fundamental laws, the document declared that the following provisions were unanimously adopted: All executive officers were to be removed and the Congress dissolved. A council was to be selected by the commander-in-chief (Santa Anna), consisting of two members from each department, who were to designate the provisional President. The President so designated was to take over the government of the country immediately, and within two months was to issue a call for a new Congress. This new Congress was to meet within six months after the call was issued, and was to transact no other business but the formation of a constitution. And the provisional President was to have all powers "necessary for the organization of

¹ Calderon, *Life in Mexico*, 334, 335.

² Dublan y Lozano, IV, 32.

all branches of the public administration," or, in other words, was to act as dictator.

As the new President was to be chosen by a body selected by Santa Anna himself, the plan was simply equivalent to naming Santa Anna for the post, and to delivering over the whole of Mexico into his hands.

Bustamante replied to the Bases of Tacubaya by proclaiming the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1824, and for several days longer he held out while some skirmishing between his forces and those of Santa Anna went on in the suburbs. No great harm was done on either side, but Bustamante's men were deserting, and he presently abandoned the city and retreated toward Guadalupe, where he offered battle. Neither party, however, had much stomach for serious fighting, and eventually, on October 6, 1841, an amicable arrangement was made between the two commanders, by which the government troops were turned over to Santa Anna and it was provided that no person should be punished for his past political acts or for any expression of his opinions.¹ Three days later the comedy of a meeting of the council named by the commander-in-chief was gone through with, and Santa Anna was declared duly elected as provisional President of the republic. He continued to govern, without any real check on his powers, for more than three years.

For the first few months the course of his government ran with comparative smoothness. There were some outbreaks of minor importance, and hostilities were continually taking place on the frontiers of Texas, Yucatan, and Guatemala; but his dictatorship was not seriously questioned. He had now reached a point where he thought it safe to affect great state. One may read of gala performances at the opera in his honor—the staircase "lighted by and lined all the way up with footmen in crimson and gold livery"; of the President and his suite driving in open carriages, with outriders and an escort of cavalry—carriages, outriders, and escort all at a full gallop; of his "brilliant cortège of offi-

¹ *Convenios de la Estanzuela*; Dublan y Lozano, IV, 34.

cers" in full-dress uniforms and of diplomatic dinners at the palace, with six colonels standing all through the meal behind the President's chair.¹

One very extraordinary incident of this period of Santa Anna's career was the ceremony of burying the foot which he had lost at Vera Cruz. The members of the cabinet and their principal clerks, the President's personal staff, the general staff of the army, and other officers formed a procession, which was escorted by two regiments of infantry and a squadron of cavalry, with their bands, and a battery of artillery. In the midst of this procession, as the newspapers of the day recorded, was borne a funeral urn, handsomely draped, in which was a box containing the foot. Having arrived at the cemetery of Santa Paula, the box containing the foot was placed in a stone urn on top of a column, the whole crowned with the arms and flag of the republic. A salute of artillery announced the end of this part of the solemn ceremony, after which a discourse was pronounced by the Licentiate Ignacio Sierra y Rosso.²

The government of Santa Anna was not inefficient, but he was extravagant, and there can be no doubt that all his surroundings were corrupt. The condition of the country was constantly growing worse, and in spite of the fact that the nation was practically at peace the state of the finances of the republic was growing more and more unsatisfactory. Trade did not increase. The interest due to foreign bondholders was paid irregularly, and the bonds were selling in London below forty. All roads and public works were neglected, and every available dollar went to satisfy the army. But dollars were hard to come by, and only by the seizure of property belonging to the church was Santa

¹ Calderon, 358; Mayer, *Mexico as It Is*, 71, 74. An amusing legend of Santa Anna's ostentation and cruelty—which, however, appears to have no basis of historical fact—is printed in No. 412 of the *Nineteenth Century* magazine (June, 1911), under the title, "Señora Santa Anna's Misadventure," by Baron Malortie.

² *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 488. C. M. Bustamante says he composed an inscription for this monument, but it does not appear whether it was used. The text of this production, with a description of the monument, will be found in his *Gabinete Mexicano*, I, 145.

Anna able to relieve some of his most pressing necessities.¹

The first distinct shock to his administration was suffered when the constitutional Congress, summoned under the provisions of the Bases of Tacubaya, met on June 10, 1842. Up to that time the invariable rule had been that the government in power always carried the election.² On this occasion, in spite of the ordinary precautions, the majority of the Congress proved to be strongly Federalist, and inclined to take rather radical views as to the need of reforming the army and the church. For months this Congress sat and discussed various projects, none of which came to anything, but the talk of the capital became increasingly liberal.

The inclination of Congress for a democratic constitution was highly obnoxious to Santa Anna, whose ideas were by no means favorable to religious toleration, or to control of the army by Congress, or to the exercise of real self-government by the departments. However, it was of course an easy matter at any time to have the garrison of the city of Mexico pronounce against Congress; and Santa Anna, having withdrawn to Manga de Clavo on the usual plea of ill health, and all being in readiness, the troops declared Congress to be unworthy of confidence and dissolved that body. A proclamation was issued at the same time by Bravo, the acting President, which declared that as the towns and garrisons of various departments, including the garrison of Mexico, had refused to recognize the constituent Congress, a crisis had arisen which made it impossible for that body to continue; and that, as it was necessary to "offer to the nation guarantees of its future happiness," the government would appoint a council composed of "citizens distinguished by their learning and patriotism" to frame a constitution. In other words, the government announced

¹ Bancroft, *Mexico*, V, 239, 246, gives details.

² "Elections among us do not rest upon any solid basis, for they are always in accordance with the will of the party in power and are entirely illusory."—(Alaman, *Defensa*, Introd., xviii.)

that Santa Anna would write a constitution to suit himself.¹

The new council showed no great haste in performing its duties, but Santa Anna came back to the capital early in March, and on June 12, 1843, the new Constitution was proclaimed. It was distinctly Centralist. The official name of the country was no longer "The United States of Mexico," but "The Mexican Republic." The country was to be divided into departments, having at the head of each a governor, appointed by the central authorities upon the nomination of the departmental assemblies. These assemblies had certain defined and very limited powers. The President was to be elected for five years. There was to be a House of Deputies, chosen by an elaborate system of indirect elections. There was to be a Senate, of which one-third was to be appointed by the central government, and two-thirds by the departmental assemblies. The Catholic Church was to be protected by the nation, to the exclusion of any other. The preservation of the *fueros*, or special privileges of the church and the army, was carefully provided for by an article under which no one could be tried or sentenced in civil or criminal cases but by judges who had special jurisdiction ("*jueces de su proprio fuero*"), and in accordance with laws enacted and tribunals established prior to the transaction which might be in question. Slavery was declared abolished.² The new Congress was to meet on the first day of January, 1844, and on the following day was to proceed to ascertain the votes cast by the departments for the President of the republic. The President-elect was to take office on the first day of the following February.

One auspicious event occurred to smooth the path of the new government, for before the time came for the inauguration of the newly elected Congress the war with Yucatan was brought to an amicable end. After some negotiations, a

¹ See Decree of Dec. 19, 1842; *Dublan y Lozano*, IV, 352. The names of the eighty men who were to compose this council can be found in the same volume, 354.

² *Ibid.*, 428-449.

treaty was entered into at the city of Mexico on December 15, 1843, by which Yucatan agreed to recognize the government about to be established under the Constitution of June, 1843, and was to have representation in the Congress, but at the same time it was to enjoy complete autonomy.¹

The elections for President and the members of Congress in the year 1843 were conducted with skill and care, and it was believed that no such blunders had been committed as at the previous election. The government nominees were carefully selected and looked after and duly returned, and an apparently subservient Congress met on New Year's Day of 1844, and on the next day declared that Santa Anna had been chosen President of the republic by an all but unanimous vote.² So far all was well, but before many months the new President and his Congress were destined to be involved in bitter quarrels. The twenty-seven months of Santa Anna's dictatorship had been marked by abuses of power, and the resources of the nation had been squandered. Taxes had been increased and the money used to keep up an oppressive military display. At the same time Santa Anna's private fortune had been increasing, and, very much to the scandal of the public, he had been buying valuable estates in the department of Vera Cruz. His friends and supporters were not at all slow to follow his example, and their suddenly acquired wealth in the midst of the general distress of the nation gave rise to unpleasant but natural suspicions. There was unquestionably a general desire throughout the country to shake off this heavy burden, but until the hour struck the leading men in Congress and in the army were, to all appearances, Santa Anna's very obedient servants.³

¹ *Ibid.*, 675-678.

² Nineteen departments out of twenty-one voted in his favor.

³ Rivera, *Historia de Jalapa*, III, 606.