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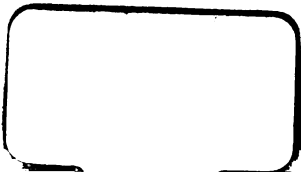


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ECONOMICS**

**ESTABLISHED 1913**



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91



# A NEW ERA IN OLD MEXICO

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B y G . B . W I N T O N

¡Viva la independencia!

—*Hidalgo.*

El respeto al derecho ageno es la paz.

—*Juarez.*

Es preciso tener fe en la justicia.

—*Diaz.*

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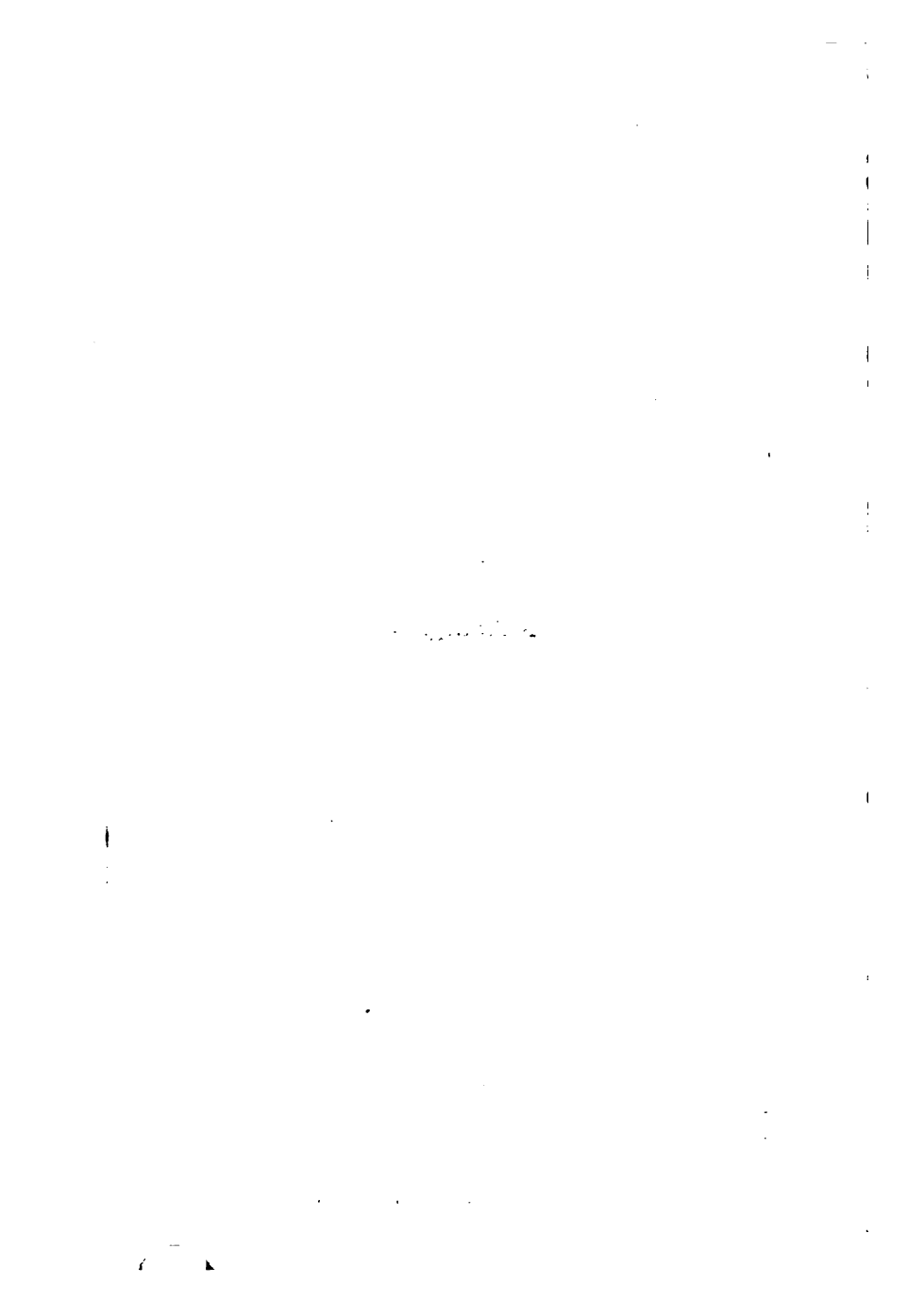
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*Á Mi Esposa.*





## PREFACE.

THIS is not a history, but a clew to the meaning of history. The history of Mexico in English remains to be written. It ought to be written. But to write it is not so simple a matter as to turn off a volume like this. Wishing to give some account of Mexico as it is, after a residence there of a good many years, the author has found himself under the necessity of explaining the things that are by the things that have been. He trusts that this book may be a guide to intelligent observation and to further studies upon the part of others. That it may contribute to a better understanding between near neighbors is the hope that more than any other has set him the task of its preparation. He is aware that it is repetitious, and fears that it may be tedious; yet he believes that interest in Mexico and its affairs is in our day so deep and so sincere among those who read the English language as to make welcome even a faulty and hasty volume concerning that country and its people.



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# A NEW ERA IN OLD MEXICO.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GEOGRAPHICAL.

FEW sections of the earth's surface containing the same number of square miles as Mexico have so great a variety of geographical conditions. On the whole, the country may be described as high, dry, and cool. This last adjective is sure to be a surprise to those who have not made conditions there a study. Yet it is a fact that, even in summer, the climate of a large part of Mexico is often uncomfortably cool. The country is a great triangle, slightly curved like a cornucopia and spreading toward the north. Down either side, near the Gulf on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west, runs a high wall of mountains. The western range—Sierra Madre del Occidente, as it is called in Spanish—is a continuation of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. The eastern range corresponds in a general way with the Rocky Mountains, though lying further to the east and not forming with them, by any means, an unbroken chain. These mountain ranges are a fence to the interior of the country, shutting off from it much moisture and the greater part of the bois-

terous weather of the coasts. They divide the whole topography of Mexico into three sections, with fairly well marked distinctions of climate. The lands lying in these three altitudes,—for it is mostly a question of altitude,—are commonly spoken of as hot, temperate, and cool.

The hot lands, *tierras calientes*, are the lowlands. With the exception of a few valleys of the interior,—gorges rather,—which drop downward to levels so low that the tropical sun creates within them a tropical climate, these lands lie exclusively along the coast. They form a narrow band, widening a little at the northeastern corner of the republic into the lower valley of the Rio Grande, but, for the most part, less than a hundred miles in breadth, which extends around the edge of the whole republic, excepting, of course, the northern boundary. This band is a strictly tropical region, more than half of it lying south of the Tropic of Cancer. It is a flat and badly drained country, subject, for the most part, to heavy rains in their season, and then to long periods of drought and heat. The vagaries of the trade winds leave much of it poorly watered, and its natural condition is that of a somewhat arid jungle alternating with marsh and sluggish streams. It is the habitat of countless varieties of pestiferous insects, of gaudy tropical birds without number, of wild game and wild cattle which hide in its jungles, and of comparatively few people.

As will be readily inferred from the conditions

indicated, it is by no means a healthful section. Yellow fever is rarely absent, and mosquitoes and malaria abound. Only a few centers of population of any consequence have ever been established in these coastal belts, and they only because of the necessary business connected with the seaports. At present Vera Cruz, Tampico, Acapulco, and the termini of the Tehuantepec Railway, are the most important of these cities. Guaymas, Mazatlan, and Tepic are also places of some importance. Monterey, on the northern foothills of the great range of the east, just where it begins to bend to the south, is only seventeen hundred feet above sea level, and in some respects should be mentioned as one of the hot country cities. It is far from the seacoast, however, and so near to the higher ranges of mountains that its climate is quite distinct from that of the coast towns.

Next above the hot country is what is spoken of as the temperate zone. It is not, for the most part, temperate so nearly as subtropical. It begins at an altitude of some three thousand feet, where the moisture flowing from the Gulf and from the Pacific strikes against the swelling sides of the lofty mountain ranges and pours down a life-giving flood of rains. Frost rarely comes to this section, which, extending upward to five or six thousand feet of elevation according to the latitude, forms a zone of living green which belts the triangle of the republic from the northeast around by the south and up the west side. Similar conditions, with slight variations as

regards rainfall, obtain on the interior of these high mountain ranges, especially toward the north, where the interior plateaus are usually less than five thousand feet in altitude. These temperate lands, so called, are the home of the orange and, in the South, of the coffee berry. Their abundant vegetation and countless and gorgeous flowers, as well as the splendid scenery due to the fact that for the most part this zone lies on the mountain sides, make these lands ideally beautiful. The very fact, however, that it is mostly but a belt on the slope of the mountains reduces the territory within this zone which is arable to such a degree that the population which it supports is necessarily limited. Where the topography and latitude allow, bananas and oranges, as well as many other fruits, coffee, and certain grains of the temperate zone, may be cultivated to great advantage.

Beginning in the same altitudes with the *tierra templada*, and extending upward to the valley regions from eight to ten thousand feet above sea level, is the *tierra fria*, or cold country. The word applied with exactness would signify only those very high plateaus and mountain sides where frost must be contended with and vegetation is at a grave disadvantage. In practice, however, most of the lands of the great interior plateau, which has an average altitude of about six thousand feet, are spoken of as the *tierra fria*. Some geographers, on the other hand, insist that this region is, properly speaking, the temperate zone—certainly a more exact description of it



in English. Its products are precisely those of that section of the earth's surface usually spoken of as the temperate zone. It is true that they are modified in a large measure by the circumstance that this region in Mexico is an interior and arid plateau. The development of vegetable life is not simply a question of the proportion between heat and cold. Other influences must be taken into the account, notably the question of rainfall and of the relative temperature of night and day.

This great plateau of Mexico conforms in general outline to the triangular shape of the country itself. It has been, from the beginning of its history, the home of the bulk of Mexico's people. Cut off by the high fence of mountains on either side from the moisture of the seacoast region, it is a land of abundant sunshine and equable climate. The rainfall over most of its area is not sufficient for anything like heavy vegetation. The water supply is further limited by the circumstance that this rainfall is confined to three or four summer months known as the rainy season. Since the stratification of the rocks underlying most of Mexico's interior has been greatly broken and tilted from the horizontal by heavy volcanic action, there are on this high table-land comparatively few perennial springs and almost no permanent running streams. Over the greater part of its surface crops of Indian corn and beans, of wheat, barley, and other grains, may be raised with more or less certainty without irrigation. Wherever

running streams or carefully hoarded rainfall can be taken advantage of for the purpose of irrigation, crops are absolutely assured. The unfailing sunshine and the remarkable fertility of the rather sandy and rocky soil, which does not appear to be fertile, give abundant reward when the labor of the husbandman is supplemented by the water supply which is the one absolutely essential requisite. So essential, indeed, is it that, in certain sections of Mexico, it is the custom in transferring agricultural lands to sell the water right and let the land go with it.

In a general way it may be said of Mexico's highlands that the rainfall, and with it the possibility of human habitation, increases toward the south. At its northern extremity the plateau is wide and dry. Somewhat lower than at the south, its climate is warmer, and the wide plains are so scorched by the ardent sun that they are valuable chiefly as pasture lands. Toward the southern extremity the whole land grows narrower, and the moist winds from either side more frequently sweep over the mountain tops to water the plains within. The mountains also there are mostly covered with heavy vegetation, and from them flow streams which are usually soon dissipated in irrigating the wide plains. Into this narrower and more mountainous section toward the southern apex of the table-land are gathered most of the cities of the republic. Many of them have grown up around rich deposits of mineral, though their permanent prosperity would have been impos-

sible without the food supply which comes from the neighboring plains.

As would be naturally inferred, these interior plains, high, dry, and cool, are, in so far as concerns the conditions of climate and health, an almost ideal place for the habitation of man. The climate is equable, the temperature rarely falling to the freezing point, and never reaching sultriness from heat. Indeed, the air is so dry and crisp that on the warmest days one has but to enter a house or the shade of a tree to be instantly comfortable.

Above the general outline of the two mountain ranges, which are rarely above twelve thousand feet in height, shoot upward three or four great volcanic peaks. Two of these, the best known perhaps, stand sentinel over the valley in which the City of Mexico lies. Between Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl marched the Spaniards under Cortez, and from the high pass which unites these snow-covered peaks they looked downward to the west upon one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. The panorama is a splendid one still, though the advance of civilization has filled the limpid air about the City of Mexico with dust and smoke. On either side of the country stands a mountain looking out to sea. One peak, Colima, constantly sends forth a banner of smoke which may be seen far out on the Pacific. From time to time it becomes an active volcano pouring out ashes and flame. On the east, Orizaba, eighteen thousand feet high, in shape an almost perfect cone,

clothed with four thousand feet of perpetual snow, stands bathing its feet in the tropic sea by Vera Cruz. It is like Fujiyama in Japan in the circumstance of running the whole gamut of vegetation from the sea level to the snow line. It also resembles Japan's famous peak in the perfection of its symmetry. It excels it in range, however, as it stands so far south that the vegetation at its base is strictly tropical. It also overtops it several thousand feet in height. Besides these more noted peaks is the volcano of Toluca, as it is called, whose ragged and narrow crater, seamed with lava set off by a tracery of snow, looks down upon the thriving little capital of the state of Mexico. These snow-capped mountains add a finishing touch to the romantic and attractive scenery of Mexico—a country which supplies a greater variety of natural growths and of scenic effects than any other on the North American continent, or perhaps in the world.

## CHAPTER II.

### PRODUCTS.

FROM the beginning of its history Mexico has been known as rich in minerals. It was the rumored abundance of gold and other precious metals which lured on the Spaniards there as well as in the other countries which became the scenes of their adventurous invasions. Yet both previous to the conquest and at the present time the chief resources of Mexico have been agricultural. By virtue of its surprising variety of climate, nearly all the products of both the tropic and the temperate zone find their home in some part of the republic. The chief reliance of its people for food has ever been Indian corn. The discovery of this cereal by the Europeans who came to America has added vastly to the well-being of the world. Mexico is also the native habitat of the tomato, the potato, and the tobacco plant.

The primitive method of availing themselves of Indian corn is still in vogue among the people of that country. The grain is soaked in weak lye or a solution of lime till the outer coat is softened and partially dissolved. It is then washed, and, while still moist, crushed between two stones. The nether millstone of this primitive mill is a flat slab, set in a sloping position, over which the upper millstone, instead of being turned, is rubbed back and forth. The

product of the grinding is not meal, but dough, which is then patted thin and baked over an open fire without salt or other condiment. This is the food of the bulk of Mexico's population. Next in order of economic value for the feeding of the people comes the bean (frijol). The brown bean, of several species, which is cultivated throughout the whole country, both lowlands and highlands, is boiled and eaten to the accompaniment of the thin corn cakes. If the family is well to do, these boiled beans are also fried in lard before being served. It is an extremely poor man whose dinner consists of only one of these two elements. Yet one or both of them is sure to appear on the table of even the wealthiest and most cultured of Mexican families.

In some of the highlands, where the conditions of soil are favorable, wheat is sown. More generally still, on account of its hardiness in resisting cold, is planted barley. The green splotches that the chance traveler will see far up the sides of the high mountains toward the timber line are usually of barley. It can be coaxed to an altitude several hundred feet higher than the hardiest varieties of Indian corn. In the tropical and subtropical regions of Mexico sugar cane is extensively grown. Also, where conditions favor—that is to say, where a sufficiency of water can be obtained—in the tropical sections rice culture is beginning to be common. The cultivation of cotton, which always commands a high price in Mexico on account of its universal use among the

laboring people for clothing, has been greatly hampered in recent years by the ravages of the boll weevil.

Besides these products common to other lands, there are one or two almost peculiar to Mexico, which are of notable economic value. The principal of these, as regards at least the value of its product, is the maguey, or agave. This plant, resembling the aloe, produces an enormous quantity of starchy growth from which may be extracted alcoholic liquors. In the regions adjacent to Mexico City it is the juice of the plant, slightly fermented and called pulque, which is consumed. In other sections the alcohol which the plant contains is extracted by distillation, and goes under the name of mezcal, or tequila. These latter liquids are heavily charged with alcohol and very deleterious in their effects if drunk freely. This same plant, with one or two other related species, furnishes a very fine fiber which is coming to be a commercial product of no little value. This fiber, spoken of under the general name *ixtle*, was produced during 1902 to the value of \$1,706,892. Closely related with the plants producing it is the henequen, of which the product in Mexico the same year, 1902, amounted in value to \$16,937,809. There are other fibrous plants in Mexico which will be utilized in future, when their merits are properly known. One of their products of special merit is a fine grade of paper. So far the development and utilization of these fibers have languished some-

what for lack of satisfactory machinery for the extraction of the fiber from the succulent leaves.

Within recent years much attention has been drawn to the cultivation of coffee in Mexico. Coffee, rubber, and oranges have been the occasion of many investments on the part of foreigners; it may be added, also the occasion of many disappointments. All these, including also bananas, are so exacting in their requirements of climate, soil, and cultivation that the sum total of the conditions necessary for their exploitation is hard to obtain. And, often, when it is obtained, there is a vital defect in the situation caused by lack of transportation facilities. The coffee plant is extremely sensitive to cold. It must be also protected from the tropical sun. It must have a liberal supply of water. The berry, when mature, requires most careful handling; and, after all, it may be found that the soil, in a section where all these conditions are satisfactorily met, is such that the product is deficient in flavor. Like tobacco, there is an elusive somewhat in coffee, imparted by a certain savor and delicacy of soil, which can only be discovered by experiment, and can, by no means, be duplicated where conditions are unfavorable. There are a few sections in Mexico which produce coffee of a very high grade. Unfortunately, those yielding the best quality are extremely limited and so situated that extensive cultivation is impossible.

The raising of citrous fruits and bananas will



probably be greatly developed in the future. Oranges and lemons will stand the somewhat rougher climate of the high plateau, and there are extensive regions of the flat tropical jungle that might be profitably cultivated in bananas. The lack of transportation facilities has hitherto limited the production of all these various fruits, and the clog of import and export duties has not encouraged the shipping of Mexico's products to other countries. The cultivation of the rubber plant,—or plants, for there are several,—is still in its experimental stage and confined to the southern extremity of the republic. The difficulties to be solved have to do chiefly with the labor supply and the matter of transportation. The climate where these plants will grow is unhealthful and enervating for the white races. The Mexicans native to that section are averse to physical exertion, and up to the present no satisfactory plan for supplying the necessary manual labor has been devised. The transportation facilities are for the most part equally inadequate.

At the end of this chapter is appended a table of the agricultural statistics of Mexico for 1902. This has been found to be scarcely a typical year, since most of the products were greater in other seasons, notably in 1898, which was a year of good rainfall. However, these statistics are given, since they are the latest available.

The mineral wealth of Mexico has been notorious through all its history. In silver, especially, it has

excelled, having produced a quantity of this metal during the time of the Spanish occupation which is simply prodigious. Some mines seem inexhaustible still. From time to time new ones are discovered. Within recent years old and abandoned workings have been reopened by virtue of modern and economical processes of reduction. In gold it is not quite so rich, though the annual output is of considerable value. Copper and quicksilver form important elements in the total mineral product of the country. It has iron mines in only a few places. But one of its deposits of this metal, the iron mountain at the side of the city of Durango, is one of the most famous in the world. It is a longitudinal hill, about a mile long and four or five hundred feet high, composed of almost absolutely pure magnetic iron ore; the largest single lump, it is believed, in the world.

The monetary circulation of Mexico is on the silver basis. This makes a large demand for the white metal at home. Mexico's silver coins also circulate extensively in China, Japan, and other parts of the Orient. In spite of this, however, the ratio of value between silver and gold has steadily declined within recent years, a matter that has seriously cramped the financiers of the Mexican republic. The development of that country has nevertheless gone forward with unusual rapidity during the last two decades, due principally to the fact that in the early eighties several lines of railway were completed,

traversing most of its territory, and greatly facilitating the shipment and sale of its products. These railways have also contributed to the settlement of political and military disturbances, and have thus become one of the most important agencies in promoting the present era of peace. Statistics of the mining products are appended along with those of agriculture.

PRODUCTS IN 1902.

(Value in Silver.)

|                       |              |                    |            |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| Rice.....             | \$ 2,540,233 | Peanuts.....       | \$ 355,739 |
| Barley.....           | 4,916,523    | Cane brandy.....   | 7,028,616  |
| Corn.....             | 78,411,844   | Corn brandy.....   | 954,197    |
| Wheat (8,428,400 bu.) | 24,522,429   | Mezcal.....        | 2,530,812  |
| Beans.....            | 13,328,903   | Tequila.....       | 1,183,686  |
| Chickpeas.....        | 1,797,587    | Pulque.....        | 6,267,680  |
| Sweet potatoes.....   | 421,670      | Henequen (120,114, |            |
| Potatoes.....         | 580,844      | 500 pounds).....   | 16,937,809 |
| Dried red peppers..   | 3,244,239    | Cotton (49,564,659 |            |
| Sugar.....            | 17,103,760   | pounds).....       | 8,629,109  |
| Sirup.....            | 7,141,529    | Ixtle.....         | 1,706,892  |
| Juice.....            | 2,735,940    |                    |            |

1901.

(Statistics for 1902 defective.)

|                |              |               |            |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Coffee.....    | \$ 8,733,778 | Bananas.....  | \$ 445,792 |
| Chocolate..... | 1,622,844    | Tomatoes..... | 113,607    |
| Tobacco.....   | 3,009,874    | Gold.....     | 14,595,931 |
| Vanilla.....   | 1,372,462    | Silver.....   | 65,554,875 |
| Rubber.....    | 344,145      | Copper.....   | 24,631,289 |
| Oranges.....   | 723,597      | Lead.....     | 5,602,075  |

## CHAPTER III.

### POPULATION.

SINCE the early part of the fifteenth century, the population of Mexico has been made up principally of three elements. Occupying the superior place among these, in wealth, education, and power, have been the Spaniards and their pure-blooded descendants. For a time these were not counted one class, but were divided into Spaniards and Creoles—that is, those who had actually been born in Spain, and their descendants born in “New Spain,” as it was then called. Very early in the history of the relation of the Spaniards with Mexico began the habit of intermarriage with the native population. The children of mixed blood, called *Mestizos*, have multiplied with the passing of the years until, at present, they form a second large element in the population. The third, a sort of substratum, as it were, is found in the native races. The Indian tribes of Mexico were quite numerous at the time of the conquest; one usually reputable authority placing the population at sixteen millions, doubtless a very considerable exaggeration.

Taking up these several classes in their inverse order, the first thing to be said of the Indians is that their origin is shrouded in mystery. Physical and linguistic peculiarities point to a kinship with

the Pueblo Indians of Arizona and California. There are certain racial indications which hint vaguely of connection with the Japanese. It would not be a difficult supposition to explain the presence of these peoples on the western coast of America by the coming of some prehistoric clan across the ocean on the warm Japanese current. The traditions of the Mexicans point, without exception, to the north as the direction from which their fathers migrated to the Mexican plateau. There can be little doubt that those early peoples, who marked the valleys of Arizona with their irrigation canals and left their dwelling places to puzzle the archaeologists of our day among the barren cliffs of the New Mexico mountains, were connected with the tribes which, later migrating toward the south, built up the civilization of the valley of Mexico.

Just which were the aboriginal tribes of Mexico cannot be clearly made out. Ethnologists of that country who have made the subject a matter of study hold that at least three separate migrations swept over the greater part of the southern end of the plateau. Some believe that the first of these came from the south, its tribes identical with the highly civilized peoples found by the Spaniards in Peru. It seems more likely, however, that the Indian traditions are correct, and that, one after another, the early tribes came down the Pacific coast, across the Sierra Madre del Occidente, and thus into

the highlands of the interior, where each left traces of its occupancy.

Among the earliest of these were the Mayas. This tribe has left most of its more notable monuments on the peninsula of Yucatan, into which low and sultry region it was forced by a more warlike and less civilized tribe, which later took its place and defaced its records on the central plateau. In Yucatan there are to this day extensive remains in architecture and hieroglyphic inscriptions which testify to an advanced stage of civilization on the part of the Mayas. The language has been preserved in a somewhat fragmentary form, but all attempts to decipher the picture-writing hidden away in the jungles of Yucatan and Central America have been unsuccessful. After the Mayas came the Nahoas, the most prominent tribe of which division were the Toltecs. It is true that some writers believe that the Mayas themselves were of the general division called Nahoas, though there is so much confusion as to their language and history that nothing definite has been determined.

The Toltecs and other better-known tribes of the Nahoas division unhesitatingly trace their origin to the west, their early traditions plainly teaching that their tribe reached the interior plateau from the direction of the Pacific. Their traditions, to which the early historians give the weight of history,—and, indeed, they did exist at the time of the conquest in a sort of picture-writing,—trace the whole itinerary

of the migration from southern California to the valley of Mexico. There they rapidly developed the arts of civilization. The tribes of this division of aborigines appear to have been of a pacific temper. It seems quite within the range of probability that their migration from the valley of the Gila River was due to the pressure upon them there of savage neighbors. The elaborate plans for protecting their homes and the products of their labor which may yet be seen in the cliff dwellings of Arizona point in the same direction. They were an agricultural people, not inclined to the barbarities of war. In Mexico, however, thrown into contact with the robust and energetic tribes which had preceded them, notably the Zapotecs and Mixtecs,—fragments of a general racial division made by some historians under the name of Mecas,—they developed a vigorous national life. The period of their greatest prosperity was only a very brief time preceding the arrival of the Spanish. They had extensive and well-built cities at Tollan (Tula)—from which place was derived the name Toltecs—Cholula, and Teotihuacan. They understood the raising and manufacture of cotton, wore clothes, hats, and sandals, and were a tall, sprightly people, devoted still to agriculture and pacific pursuits rather than to war.

From some uncertain quarter, apparently the west, came a migration, immediately succeeding the Toltecs, which built up upon the fragments of their cities a vigorous military government. When these

were about to reach the summit of their civilization and strength, the third or, as some believe, the fourth general migration reached the central Mexican plateau from the west. These were a group of five or six tribes, called by some historians Nahuatlacas. The most famous of these tribes later became the Aztecs, who derived their name from having migrated from Aztlan, or "land of herons." This name doubtless referred to some laguna toward the west of what is now Mexico, some think to Lake Chapala in the state of Jalisco.

The Aztecs have become for modern times the typical Mexicans. The facts of the case, however, seem to be that they and their sister tribes reached the valley of Mexico, then inhabited by a mixture of Toltecs, Otomis, Chichimecs, etc., after having fought their way through numerous settlements further west, with nothing in the way of civilization except a tolerably perfect tribal organization, tremendous racial vitality, and a warlike temper, which latter proved to be their chief asset in first making a place for themselves among the civilized tribes about them, and later making a fierce stand against the Spanish invaders. Upon their arrival in the valley of Mexico they were so exhausted from constant traveling and fighting that they were forced to take refuge upon a rocky island in Lake Texcoco. There they built themselves huts of reeds, and lived on the fish and game in which the lake abounded. The soothsayer of the tribe had settled upon this island,



because he found there what had been indicated as the final resting place of their migration, a Mexican eagle sitting on the flat leaf of a nopal cactus (*opuntia*) devouring a snake. This symbol has become the Mexican coat of arms.

The Chichimecs, a warlike people themselves, had rapidly absorbed enough of Toltec civilization to develop a vigorous government. It was somewhat of the nature of a kingdom, though the king,—or kings, for frequently there were more than one,—was really no more than an Indian sachem. But as the wealth of the people increased and their tribal cities became more extensive and substantial, the naked warriors who had formerly taken the field with bow and spear came to understand the military strength which inheres in the substantially built city. Thus their larger towns soon came to be military centers, and the tribute which they exacted from the neighboring tribes increased the wealth of the governing bodies and made military organization and a standing army possible. Their principal city, important previous to the conquest, was Texcoco.

Meantime, the Aztec tribe, warriors to begin with and made all the hardier by their life as hunters and fishermen on the lake, rapidly multiplied and began to make inroads upon the agricultural regions adjacent. Their reed huts gave place to more substantial buildings of adobe, and later even of stone. Whether they brought with them the skill in the builder's art which made such prog-

ress possible, or whether, as seems more probable, artisans came to them from the neighboring cities, especially those representing the then down-trodden but somewhat highly civilized Toltecs, it is impossible to determine. At any rate, whether by virtue of their own skill in the arts of peace and war or by means of what they learned from their neighbors, their island city rapidly grew into a vigorous stronghold, soon rivaling, in both wealth and military strength the neighboring capital of the Chichimecs. For a time these rival governments engaged in fierce conflicts. Later, peace was made by the intermarriage of what had now become the royal families. By the time the Spaniards came, the reigning chief of the Aztecs was the practically undisputed ruler of the whole valley of Mexico, and of numerous tribes in the neighboring mountains, which preferred accepting his rule to risking an invasion by his warriors.

This brief account of the peopling of the country will be followed up in a later chapter. It seemed necessary here, in order to give the reader some conception of the multiplied racial strains which contributed to the native populations of Mexico. Besides those already mentioned there were, at the time of the conquest, two or three other extensive families of aborigines, of some of whom distinct strains remain to this day. The principal of these were the Tarasco Indians, inhabiting the mountainous region west of the lower end of the plateau now em-

braced in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán. These number, it is believed, even yet some three hundred thousand, and are physically of a small but robust and vital type. They had not acknowledged the authority of the Aztec emperor, but had a king of their own, with a capital and numerous other towns and cities. They were a pacific and agricultural people, whom Cortez reduced to subjection through a trick played upon their king. Besides these were the mountain Indians of the eastern Sierra Madre, now known under the general designation of Huastecos. There were also the numerous scattering and somewhat vagrant tribes of the dry plains of the central northern part of the country, drifting back and forth from Mexico into what is now the United States.

Such were the ancestors of the native Mexican. They were Indians in the sense that they were aboriginal Americans, but they bore only a slight resemblance to the Indians of the Mississippi valley and the Atlantic seaboard. It is difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy what proportion of the inhabitants of Mexico to-day are pure-blooded descendants of these Indian ancestors. So easily did the native tribes mingle with the European invaders, and so slight is the difference in complexion and general appearance between the native Mexican and the swarthy sons and daughters of southern Spain, that the strains of relationship at the present day are about as intricate in Mexico as in the United

States. Just as here Huguenots, Germans, Scandinavians, English, Irish, and the rest, have been fused into one homogeneous race, so in Mexico Spaniard, Creole, Mestizo, and Indian have become inextricably confused. There is, however, as I have already said, the general division into three sections, namely, the people of more or less pure European blood, those of mixed blood, and the full-blood Indians.

The Indians who live in the high mountainous sections and have preserved their languages and customs are, in many instances, doubtless full-blood Indians still. So also many families of wealth and social position have kept their European blood intact. This has been largely by the accident of association and local influences, rather than of purpose. There is practically no prejudice among the Mexican people either for or against the amalgamation of the races. Families that are of purely Spanish descent take no special pride in it, but speak of themselves simply as Mexicans. Those, on the other hand, who have mixed or purely Indian parentage often plume themselves upon it. Many of the great men of the country have been Indians. This stock has exhibited and still exhibits every element which goes to make up the best there is in humanity. In view of the oppression and degradation which the Spaniards deliberately inflicted upon the Indians in the earlier centuries of their contact with them, it is scarcely short of marvelous that the native stock

should have shown so much of vitality both in numbers and in producing its proportionate share of the great men of Mexican history.

With reference to the people of mixed blood, it must be confessed that they often exhibit the well-known tendency to follow the vices and weaknesses of both sides of their ancestry rather than their virtues. This has been due, however, not solely to the accident of blood. Their anomalous position in the nation has had its effect. The Spaniards and their descendants have been to some extent a caste. Indians who are Indians, especially since Mexico achieved her independence, are proud of it, and hold doggedly to their racial integrity. They are also, to a large extent, agriculturalists, and lead the hardy and independent life of sons of the soil. Between these two extremes are the people of mixed blood, who form the bulk of the population of most towns and cities. They are the servants, the artisans, and the detached element in the population generally, without the strengthening influences of wealth or family position, and subject to the insidious temptations which beset a servile class. They should constitute the great middle class of the people. But Mexican society has for four hundred years been organized in such a way as to eliminate the middle class. Those, therefore, who should by rights be members of it are constantly oscillating between attainment to the standing and privileges of the ruling class and subjection to the accepted poverty and

## A New Era in Old Mexico.

submission of the lower. They affect to despise manual labor, a weakness that has always been exhibited by the upper class in Mexico, and thus often undertake to live by their wits when they should depend on honest toil. The thievery and general unreliability which are frequently harshly attributed to the whole Mexican people have really grown out of this unsettled position of a large element in the population of the cities and towns. The Federal census of 1900 estimates that the Indians constitute thirty-eight per cent. of the population, the people of mixed blood forty-three per cent., and those of pure European blood nineteen per cent.

The Spanish language is in general use throughout the country. A few of the Indian tribes still speak their native languages, and many individuals among them, especially in remote mountain regions, are ignorant of Spanish. But with one or two exceptions these languages have not been reduced to writing, and even when this has been done, the slender opportunities for culture open to the Indians have prevented any notable literary use of them. The result is that Spanish is the language of the literature and business affairs of the whole country, the Indian dialects lingering stubbornly nevertheless. Some of these—the Aztec, or Mexican, the Otomi, the Tarascan, and the Huastec, among others—are well-organized languages, capable of a flexible and literary use. The Spanish one hears in Mexico is pure Spanish, though

exhibiting one or two slight peculiarities in the pronunciation and having in common use a large number of Indian terms, together with not a few provincialisms.

In their manner of life, both in city and country, the Mexicans have much in common with the people of western Asia and northern Africa. So manifest is the resemblance to the latter that, taken with certain traits of the stone carving and architecture of the pre-European period, it has suggested to many a racial connection with Egypt. The ingenious theories propounded to account for this, such, for example, as the revival of the myth about the buried continent of Atlantis, have not commended themselves to careful students. It seems more probable that such resemblances as antedated the coming of the Spanish were purely accidental, and that the rest are to be accounted for by the strong Moorish influence in Spain about the time of the conquest of Mexico, and the similarity in climatic conditions between the dry mesas of Mexico and the arid plateaus east and south of the Mediterranean. The domestic animals, the utensils, the pastoral atmosphere and phraseology, the manner of building houses, stables, granaries, sheepfolds, and the like, are all so similar to what obtained in Palestine two thousand years ago, that a visit to Mexico serves as an instructive commentary on the Bible.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EARLY HISTORY.

It will be interesting to follow up briefly the beginnings of Mexican history as outlined in the previous chapter. The earliest inhabitants of the country who were sufficiently civilized to leave traces of their existence were, as has been stated, the Mayas. The origin of this race is unknown. They lived principally in Yucatan, though some believe that at one period they occupied also the interior of the country. After them came the Nahoas, the principal tribe of which, the Toltecs, reached a state of civilization which resulted in the building of cities and the impression of their culture upon their successors, the various tribes of the Chichimecs. Both these and the Nahoas traced their origin to the west; some think the southwest—that is, South America; others believe that they came, as did the Aztecs later, from California or Arizona.

Last of all was the irruption into the fertile valleys of the lower apex of the Mexican plateau of seven kindred tribes from Arizona and regions thereabout. Of them the best known came to be the Tecpanecas, Tlaltoltecas, and the Aztecas. The latter arrived last of all, their fellow tribes having preceded them and settled mostly in the valley of Mexico, as it later was to be called. This is a large



basin in the mountains, containing a series of fresh-water lakes terminating at the bottom in a salt lake, Texcoco. Near the margin of this lake the Tecpanecas already had their capital, Azcapotzalco—now a suburb of Mexico City.

Thus it came about that when the Aztecs arrived and, under the direction of their medicine men, settled upon a rocky island in Lake Texcoco, they found themselves in a region claimed by their cousins the Tecpanecas. These had developed a vigorous government with a king or chief in Azcapotzalco. The Aztecs accepted allegiance under this king, paying tribute each year of fish and ducks from the lake.

Meantime, other branches of this same migration having settled adjacent to the capital city of the Chichimecs, Texcoco, situated on the eastern side of the lake, for a time admitted the sovereignty of its king. Later, when they had grown strong and self-reliant, they threw off his authority, fought among themselves, and brought on a period of great confusion. Then a shrewd Chichimec king adopted some new-comers of the same stock into his tribe, married his sons with their daughters, and thus braced his tottering throne by a hardy, civilized, and warlike addition to the population. Such was the state of affairs when the Aztecs, tiring of their position of subjects to the king of Azcapotzalco, and having themselves grown numerous and built up their island city,—which they called Tenochtitlán,—elected a king or chief of their own and forced the Tecpanecas

to recognize them as allies instead of subjects. It was not long, of course, before war broke out between them and the king of Texcoco. Their capitals were on the same lake, not far apart, and irritating conflicts of authority were not wanting. So fierce and successful were the Aztec warriors, under young Moctezuma, that they soon vanquished the Chichimec king and began to force their way to the very front among the various tribes of the valley of Mexico.

During something like fifty years, the latter part of the fifteenth century, they were engaged in a series of bloody wars, mostly wars of conquest. So fierce and arrogant did they become that if a tribe dared to offer resistance to their arms, or refuse tribute to their king, nothing prevented their going at once to reduce it, unless it was at such a distance from their capital as to make the expedition seem futile. The huge multitudes of captives which they brought back from their forages seem to have been the original prompting of the bloody rite of human sacrifice which so shocked the Spaniards on their arrival a little later. Something had to be done with these captives. Many became slaves and colonists. Others were too brave and dangerous to be left alive. Nothing was more natural than that a warlike people should have as one of their deities a God of War. So by easy stages came about the sacrifice of war prisoners to him. Some even suspect that these bloody rites involved cannibalism. If

so, it was of the nature of a religious ceremony. There is no reason to believe that the high-minded warriors of Mexico ever ate human flesh because it pleased them as an ordinary article of diet.

The human sacrifices were a sad and bloody affair. Only the heart of the victim was offered, and it was believed to be more acceptable living than dead. Hence the ceremony consisted in extracting and holding it up before the grewsome image while still throbbing. For this purpose the condemned prisoner was held upon his back on a huge stone, one of which is still to be seen in the National Museum, his head strained downward by a heavy stone yoke on his neck, while the officiating priest opened his chest with an obsidian knife, rudely tearing out the palpitating heart. The Spanish priests and soldiers, with that fondness for exaggeration which never forsook them, gave most unreasonable and impossible estimates of the number of victims thus sacrificed from time to time.

Moctezuma from being the commanding general of the army was later made king, since he was of royal blood. After extending the power of his tribe throughout almost the entire valley, he died in 1469, and was succeeded by his grandson, Axayacatl. After twelve years, Tizoc, brother of Axayacatl, succeeded him and began the construction of a new and sumptuous temple to the God of War, Huitzilopochtli. Dying himself of poison in 1486, he left the conclusion of it to his younger brother

and successor, Ahuitzatl (beaver). Having, according to a custom, waged a campaign of conquest to celebrate his accession, this new king brought back a swarm of prisoners to be victims in honor of the dedication of the temple. The chroniclers would have us believe that twenty thousand (some go as high as eighty thousand) were sacrificed. The number is not merely incredible; it is simply impossible. A brief calculation on the terms of their own narrative, which says the ceremonies lasted four days, will show that the number of victims could not have gone beyond three or four thousand.

This dedication of the temple of the War God took place in 1487. The vast concurrence of people, the shedding of so much blood, the throwing out to decay of so many corpses, the general excitement and relaxation of the occasion, produced, so it seemed, and so it may well be believed, a wholesale demoralization of the capital city, ending in a pestilence. Such a religious festival was a melancholy degeneration from the clean and wholesome rites by which the Toltecs, and even the ancestors of the Aztecs, a peaceful and agricultural community, adored the sun as the origin of their blessings and offered to him the first fruits of their harvests.

Five years later Columbus touched the shores of the New World. The savage and warlike monarch who had presided over this dedicatory ceremony, slaying himself the first victim, had continued his course of war and conquest. His people learned to

work in the soft stone which was discovered near the shore of their lake about that time, and built still more ample and substantial edifices in the capital city. In 1499 it was a victim of one of the great rain storms that visit that region from time to time. The other lakes in the valley empty into Texcoco, which, having no outlet, rose on this occasion higher and higher till it overflowed all the lower stories of the city's houses. The king, happening to be in a basement when the water began to pour in, ran out hastily, striking his forehead against the low doorway, a blow from which he never recovered. At his death, three years later, another Moctezuma was made king—Moctezuma Xocoyotzin (the younger).

This Moctezuma was a great-grandson of the one who had been a famous chief previously. Elevated to the position of supreme power at the age of thirty-four, after he had become famous as a soldier, and while exercising the prerogatives of high priest in the temple of the God of War, he became a tyrannical and autocratic ruler, with exalted conceptions of his own dignity and importance. With his army he at once went upon a campaign of conquest to obtain prisoners for the human sacrifices that were to mark his accession to the throne. Having subdued, one by one, the tribes in the adjacent valley, he and his generals later sought occasion to declare war against the vigorous republic of Tlaxcala. The people of Tlaxcala were one of the kindred tribes from

the North, who, having settled a little further east in a beautiful valley among the mountains, had developed a vigorous government republican in form. The Mexicans invaded this republic on some pretext, but really because the ambitions of their king demanded its subjugation. But the Tlaxcalans were people of the same hardy stock, and by surprising the invading army in the mountain passes they inflicted upon it a disastrous defeat. The attack was followed by a second, even more formidable, which was also repulsed with great loss to the invaders.

Domestic affairs then for a time claimed the attention of the Mexican king. He extended the buildings of his capital city, brought fresh water in from a spring at the foot of the hill of Chapultepec on the neighboring main-land, and took such measures as were possible to relieve his people after the ravages of a fierce drought. From time to time he renewed the war with Tlaxcala, and also sent out more than one expedition against the Indians of Michoacán. Of both these independent enemies of the Mexican emperor, as some historians have chosen to call him, there will be occasion to make mention later. The people of Tlaxcala became friends and allies of the Spaniards when they arrived, and in all likelihood saved the little army of Cortez from annihilation.

Far to the west, among the green mountains of Michoacán, was the independent monarchy, if so dignified and serious a term is admissible, of the Taras-

cans. Their king had his capital on the margin of Lake Pátzcuaro, one of the most beautiful fresh-water lakes on the American continent. Embowered in pine-clad mountains, it is still surrounded by a necklace of towns inhabited mostly by full-blooded Tarascan Indians. The town, which was at that time the capital of an extensive government—though one that was not at all compact in its organization—is now a somewhat dilapidated village; still called, however, by its ancient name of Tzintzuntzan, or “place of humming birds.” A great painting by the Spanish master, Titian, said to have been the gift of one of the kings of Spain to the Indian king of Michoacán, still hangs in the parish church. The efforts of Moctezuma to reduce this tribe of Indians to subjection to his Mexican empire were as fruitless as were his attacks upon Tlaxcala. The Tarascans were not a warlike people, but were too numerous and too secure in their mountain fastnesses to be subdued by any military expedition which Moctezuma was able to send against them. Such was the situation in Mexico at the time of the Spanish invasion.

Much has been written, first and last, concerning the civilization, languages, customs, and state of advancement of the Mexican Indians at the time of the conquest. Certain it is that they had developed an admirable calendar, had mastered some of the fundamental principles of architecture in stone, and had devised civil institutions concerning the elaborateness of which there are many and various opinions. The

early records left us by the soldiers and ecclesiastics of the invading Spanish forces are so frequently contradictory, and in many respects so manifestly exaggerated, that they do not command absolute credence. In contrast with their exaltation of the civilization and power of the native races was the unreasonable urgency on the part especially of the priests to destroy and obliterate all records and evidences of the religion and civilization which had preceded their advent. The social and political institutions of the people were, according to a well-known law, largely the outcome of their religious faith; and the best possible gauge of their quality would be a study of the religions upon which they were founded. But the Spanish priests were unhesitating in their belief that all the religious rites, ceremonies, temples, and records were a work of the devil. They therefore destroyed them, right and left. As usually happens, the priests of the aboriginal religions were also the learned men of the different tribes, and such records in picture-writing, and the like, as existed were usually written and kept by them. This treasure of accumulated manuscripts (in parenthesis it may be remarked that the Indians understood the manufacture of an excellent grade of paper made of maguey fiber) was almost completely lost to the world through the zeal of men who could not understand that, in order to convince people of other faiths of the truths of Christianity, it is well as far as may be to accept their own reli-



gious ideas as legitimate in their sphere and as having in themselves also a basis of truth.

In spite of the fact that at the time when America was discovered by Europeans the Aztecs and their neighbors had developed into a warlike and powerful nation, it is true still that the Indian tribes of Mexico were essentially agricultural in their habits. They were not mere wandering warriors living by rapine and the chase, as were so many tribes inhabiting the territory which is now the United States. Before the coming of the Spaniards they cultivated corn, beans, chocolate, pepper, tomatoes, cotton, onions, garlic, pumpkins, various succulent roots, and a number of different nuts and fruits. The Spaniards added comparatively little to the aggregate of agricultural products, only bringing in wheat, barley, and oats, with a few kinds of fruits, and introducing domestic animals and better tools. It is interesting to note that the plow which they brought is the Moorish plow, and dates back in northern Africa and Asia to prehistoric times. It may be seen in Mexico, unchanged to this day, an evidence of the conservatism of the people and of the unfortunate fact that they remain yet almost in the same state in which they found themselves immediately after the Spanish conquest. With that conquest we must now deal.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SPANISH CONQUEST.

No more hardy band of adventurers ever landed upon an alien shore than the company which, under the lead of Hernando Cortez, drew to land on the 21st of April, 1519, inside the rocky island of San Juan de Ulloa and on the sandy beach where now stands the city of Vera Cruz. This point had been visited a little more than a year before by Hernandez de Córdova, who, with Juan de Grijalva, had explored the coast of Yucatan and the adjacent islands, turning back at last from the shore of the main-land with stories of an immense empire, rich in gold and precious stones, which lay far in the interior.

Cuba and other West Indian islands had been settled by the Spaniards in the years following the voyages and discoveries of Christopher Columbus. In 1511, Diego Velasquez, who, from having been a servant in the house of Diego Columbus, brother of Don Christopher, became later the colonial governor of the island of Española, was transferred to the larger island of Cuba, recently vanquished by the Spanish arms, taking with him, among others, his private secretary, Don Hernando Cortez. This young man was a native of the Spanish city of Medellín, where he was born in the year 1485. Running away from school at the age of sixteen years,

he had, after various difficulties, secured passage to the New World, where, on the island of Santo Domingo, he was living as a farmer and land-owner at the time when his friend, Don Diego, was made governor of the island of Cuba. In the skirmishes which preceded the settlement of this new government he distinguished himself as an intrepid soldier, and when the lands and slaves captured in the conquest were divided among the followers of the governor general, he received a large assignment of both in the province of Santiago.

The voyages of discovery among the islands and along the peninsula of Yucatan mentioned above were undertaken under the direction and at the expense of the new governor general of Cuba. Having become convinced by the reports brought back by his two captains that there were great opportunities for procuring booty on the main-land of Mexico, he organized a new and larger expedition under the special pretext of sending it in search of Grijalva, who, having gone out with one or two ships on an exploring trip, had not been heard from. Velasquez was much concerned to find a proper captain general for this new and somewhat formidable expedition. It was of the utmost importance to him that both the glory and the booty of the voyage should be his. Yet it was easy to see that the man having charge of it might put himself into communication directly with the royal government of Spain, and thus rob the real promoter of the expedition of all credit that might

accrue. For it was well known that the Spanish government was as greedy for added territory and added spoils as any of the ardent adventurers who crossed the waters in this crusade. After much hesitation, the governor finally decided to offer the command of the expedition to his friend and former secretary, Don Hernando. They had not always been on good terms, and one disagreement had well-nigh proved serious for the adventurous secretary. But his ability was well known to his superior, who, after all, was chiefly interested in the success of the expedition.

So, toward the year 1515, the ships of the new flotilla were gathered at Santiago de Cuba, from which point they sailed away, stopping for a week at Macaca, and a little later at Habana. The fleet consisted of eleven ships carrying five hundred and eight soldiers, thirteen of them armed with muskets and thirty-two with crossbows, sixteen horses, ten pieces of brass artillery, and four falconets. The soldiers had been recruited under the royal banner of Spain, beside which Cortez had the presumption to raise another in imitation of that of Constantine, bearing a cross with this inscription in Latin: "Friends, with true faith let us follow the cross, for thereby we shall conquer."

On the peninsula of Yucatan they picked up a captive Spanish priest and a few natives. Among these was an Aztec slave girl named Marina, who still remembered well her native language. She also knew

Maya, the language of her captors, in which she was able to converse with Father Aguilar, the priest, who had learned it during his captivity. She was of attractive person and sprightly intellect, and became a devoted attendant of the captain general. When negotiations with the Aztecs were later entered upon, she translated their messages into Maya for Father Aguilar, who then gave them to his captain in Spanish. Long before the conquest was consummated, however, she had herself acquired the Spanish language.

Landing on the shore of Mexico where it is protected by the rocky island of San Juan, Cortez shrewdly took advantage of the Spanish law giving a certain power of autonomy to municipalities, and founded the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz—that is, the Rich City of the True Cross. The proper officers were elected according to the royal law, and, as symbolic of the power of the new government, a gallows was set up, and hard by a picket for exposing the heads of those who should be executed. There is a grim significance about these finishing touches in the organizing of the first *ayuntamiento* on Mexican soil which will not escape the reader. So soon as the city government was duly established the captain general resigned to it the commission he had received from the governor of Cuba. He was promptly elected commander in chief, and at the same time appointed civil governor. Thus at one stroke he cut himself loose from every obligation to Velasquez and put

himself at the head of all the powers, both civil and military, of this newest of Spanish colonies.

Cortez soon decided upon the bold and daring step of destroying his ships. Having selected two or three of his most faithful and loyal friends, he sent them with one ship and its crew to report directly to the King of Spain, giving him an account of the expedition and protesting the loyalty of his new colonists. Then, in the month of July (1519), having removed from the ships all the sails and cordage and all metals that might be of service in building others, he sent them to the bottom. Such were these hardy sons of a race which in that day had no superior in physical and intellectual vigor and in all the traits which go to make up the successful soldier and explorer. The courage, the calmness, the resourcefulness, the endurance, both physical and moral, displayed by Cortez and his men, during the two years following this reckless act, form a contrast to the qualities found in the soldiers of Spain to-day which is worthy of careful study.

Meantime, the Mexican king and his court were shaken with the most profound anxiety. Moctezuma, though he had been a bold and successful warrior in his youth, had been much affected in more recent years by the superstitions and prognostications of the priests. He was himself high priest at the time of his election to the position of ruler. A tradition was current that Quetzalcoatl would reappear. The description of this fabled god as fair-skinned

and bearded tallied so with the appearance of the Europeans that the superstitious king could not shake himself clear of the feeling that the Spaniards were divine. Their muskets, their cannon, and the terrible horses on which they mounted and rode to victory, augmented this supernatural impression. Some of the priests who had but recently essayed the rôle of prophet had interpreted certain mystic signs and incidents to signify that the king, Moctezuma, was soon to be destroyed. In view of all these things, he had fallen into a profound melancholy, and instead of boldly preparing to resist the encroachments of these invaders, he began to send them embassy after embassy with the anxious request that they leave him in peace. To secure their compliance, these messengers went loaded with gold and precious stones. These presents, far from encouraging Cortez and his followers to leave Mexico, served rather the purpose of loadstones to attract them more and more. Scarcely anything in history is more humiliating than the consuming avarice which, like a burning thirst, drew the Spanish invaders on wherever they touched the New World.

On the 16th of August, 1519, followed by his own troops, except a small garrison which he left in Vera Cruz, by several thousands of the inhabitants of Campoalla, a neighboring town, and some hundreds of Indian burden-bearers dragging his artillery, the Spanish captain set out in the direction of the interior highlands. His army consisted of four hundred foot

soldiers, fifteen cavalrymen, and six pieces of artillery.

On the way to Mexico lay the republic of Tlaxcala. Its people were not friendly to the Aztecs, and after they had suffered a series of bloody defeats due to the superiority of the Spanish arms, they at last made an alliance with Cortez to help him against Moctezuma. Thus reënforced, the Spanish rapidly advanced upon the valley of Mexico. The first town of importance belonging to Moctezuma's domain was Cholula, which they captured and pillaged with inexcusable brutality, the Tlaxcalans wreaking their hatred upon hereditary enemies.

Pressing forward as autumn drew on, despite constant protests from the Aztec king, early in November Cortez reached without further serious fighting the island city of Tenochtitlán, before whose gates the now intimidated monarch met him. Having presented himself in state before Cortez, who received him with the brusque frankness of the soldier, he told the Spaniards that since they had come from the East and were evidently sons of the sun, Mexico looked upon them as the rightful rulers of those lands. (The worship of the sun had long been a primary element of the native religion.) A day later, November 10, 1519, Cortez returned the official visit and entered the sacred city. Under the guise of reasonable curiosity he carefully examined its approaches, streets, buildings, and natural defenses. Several of his followers, as well as the captain himself, have left ac-



counts of Tenochtitlán as the Spaniards found it. Bernal Diaz, Alonzo de Ojeda, Andrés de Papia, Alonzo de Mata, and an anonymous *conquistador*, all wrote descriptions of the city which agree in their essential particulars. It was substantially built, of mud bricks for the most part, but with some structures in stone, along streets which on the east and south terminated in the lake, while to the west and north several of them were continued in causeways, extending to the main-land but bridging frequent canals through which canoes might pass.

Having been assigned a spacious palace as a place of residence, the Spaniards made themselves at home in Mexico, setting up an altar for their worship and fortifying their house. As if further to excite their cupidity, an evil fortune led them to discover a secret door in the palace which had been turned over to them, which, on being broken open, revealed a treasure-room containing a large quantity of gold. About this time word reached Cortez of a disastrous battle in which his Vera Cruz garrison had engaged through coming to the support of their neighbors, the Campoallans, against an Aztec army. A number of the Spaniards, including their commander, Juan Escalante, were killed, and one taken prisoner. The Aztecs sent the head of this prisoner all the way to Mexico, that their king might be convinced at last that these invaders were not immortal beings. Advised of this, Cortez called a council and appeared with several of his leaders before Moctezuma, charg-

ing him with treachery. The king made the very just reply that the conduct of his soldiers in their campaign against a rebellious province was not under his immediate supervision, but that he would surrender the commander of these troops, with his principal officers, to the Spaniards so soon as they returned. When, true to his promise, he had done this, Cortez, after investigating the incidents of the death of his fellow-countrymen, though, with the exception of one prisoner, they had been slain in warfare, nevertheless condemned the general with his son and fifteen of his principal associates to be burned alive. This cruel and inexcusable sentence was carried out in the presence of Moctezuma and his people, and the king himself was henceforth kept a prisoner in the palace of Cortez, loaded with chains. He continued to beg Cortez to withdraw, insisting that his people were reaching a state of mind such that he could not be responsible for the consequences.

About this time Cortez and Moctezuma each heard with no small satisfaction that ships had arrived off Vera Cruz. The Indian king took it for granted that as the Spaniards now had ships they would at once sail away to their own country. Cortez was pleased, because he expected to find in these new arrivals the recruits which his messengers to Spain had sent out. Both were destined to be soon undeceived. The new arrivals proved to be a fleet of fifteen vessels, bringing some eight hundred soldiers, which had been sent by the governor general of

Cuba. The messengers of Cortez to Spain had, contrary to his orders, touched at Cuba on their way, and Velasquez, perceiving at once, from the accounts they brought, the purpose of Cortez, had organized and sent this expedition to arrest him, that he might secure for himself the fruits of the voyage of conquest.

Leaving Pedro Alvarado with a small garrison in Mexico, Cortez set out at once with such of his own troops as he could gather—for many of them had been dispatched to interior towns—and marched rapidly to the coast. His hardened veterans made a fierce onslaught by night on the sleeping city of Vera Cruz, now in possession of the new arrivals, captured the commander, and secured the surrender of his troops. There were few lost on either side, the whole result of the movement being the addition of this new force to the army of Cortez. Scarcely any other episode in the history of this daring adventurer displays him to greater advantage.

In possession now of a respectable army, he at once began to send detachments hither and thither throughout the country in order to establish formally his position as its ruler. Scarcely had he begun to plan these new measures, however, when word came to him that his little garrison in Tenochtitlán was hard pressed and in need of immediate succor. This had come about mostly through the stupid cruelty of Alvarado, who had without provocation murdered a multitude of prominent people there.

Cortez, hurrying back, arrived in Mexico June 24, 1520, greatly to the relief of his beleaguered lieutenant. He visited upon Alvarado, however, no severer punishment than a reproof for his conduct. But, thoroughly ashamed of it, he declined to see Moctezuma, and, in order to propitiate somewhat the people, liberated a brother of the king that he might help to quiet the disturbed city. This brother, however, who was of a vigorous and warlike spirit, instead of quieting the insurrection, did all in his power to promote it. Within twenty-four hours after being liberated, he advanced to attack the Spaniards with a huge army. Then began the bloody struggle in the streets of the Mexican capital which resulted at the last in the complete defeat and ignominious retirement of the invaders.

For five days the attack went on. Finding himself hard pressed, Cortez undertook to take advantage of the influence of Moctezuma as in a critical moment Alvarado had done. The king again ascended to the roof of the palace where the Spaniards were fortified, and exhorted his people to desist. The sight of him on this occasion, however, instead of quieting only irritated them the more, his own nephew calling out in a loud voice that he was no longer their king. This youth then bending his bow sent an arrow flying at the unhappy captive, and the shower of stones and arrows which followed drove Moctezuma mortally wounded from his place. The Indians renewed their attack with redoubled bitterness.

The position of the Spaniards finally becoming intolerable, Cortez decided to force his way out. Providing his troops with a movable bridge for spanning the gaps in the causeway, he led his little band forth at midnight. Before they were fairly started, however, the huge tom-tom on the high Teocalli alarmed the city, and the attacking host swarmed upon them like angry bees. That was the famous *Noche Triste*, or mournful night. Cortez at dawn sat down, weary and wounded, under a cypress which is still shown, and shed tears over the gallant men left behind, some dead, others prisoners—a fate worse than death, for these were destined to be sacrificed before the dreadful God of War.

Harassed by the Mexicans, whom they constantly repulsed with huge slaughter, the Spaniards slowly retiring reached the city of their allies, the Tlaxcalans. Here they rested during the winter, recruited somewhat in numbers by the crews of chance vessels arriving at Vera Cruz, which crews Cortez always managed to attach to himself.

The next summer, 1521, he again attacked the capital. This time the city was approached by water, as well as by land, the Spaniards having built and launched a number of brigantines. The warlike brother of Moctezuma, who had succeeded him, had died of smallpox, a new scourge brought by the Spaniards, which decimated the whole Aztec empire. He had been succeeded by Cuauemoc—“last of the Aztecs”—a valiant and high-spirited youth, one of the

most romantic figures in history. The melancholy story of how he lost his kingdom and his life may be read in the pages of Prescott. It need not be detailed here. A noble bronze statue of him, surrounded by figures which are a grim commemoration of some of the cruelest deeds of the Spaniards in that time of blood, stands on the famous Paseo de la Reforma, placed there by the government under Porfirio Diaz. In August, 1521, the city of Tenochtitlán passed into the hands of the Spaniards. Since that date it has been known as Mexico.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SPAIN IN MEXICO.

FOR exactly three hundred years, from 1521 to 1821, Mexico was reckoned a province of Spain and called *Nueva España*, New Spain. From the year 1535 onward the administration was vice-regal. The viceroys, though their terms were limited at various times by royal decrees to six and even to three years, virtually had unlimited tenure of office, since these decrees were systematically disregarded. Autocratic in power, they were nevertheless subject to the whim of the King of Spain, who could depose or recall them at will, and to the supervision of a self-perpetuating royal council associated with him called *El Consejo de las Indias*. They were trammled also by an *Audiencia* at the seat of their government, a sort of court of review, ostensibly appointed to audit their accounts and see that the royal treasury received its due share from the income of the province, but becoming with time a check upon their actions and a medium of communication between the people and the court of Spain. At one time, for example, a viceroy had occasion to borrow three millions of dollars. The money was cheerfully lent by the merchants of the City of Mexico, since, as one of their own historians remarks, the system of checking the accounts of these representatives of the Spanish

throne was so strict that the lenders ran no risk of losing their money.

It is unhappily to be recorded, however, that so unbounded were the prerogatives of the viceroys, and so vague is the border line between government and oppression, for abuses inflicted by these officers upon the people at large there was virtually no redress. The native population was indeed looked down upon by the Spanish crown itself to such a degree that treatment of them which would have been thought intolerable if inflicted upon Europeans seemed to their Spanish majesties to call for no special censure.

These natives of Mexico labored from the beginning under at least three great disadvantages. First, they were "infidels." A great deal of the cruel hostility with which the Mohammedan Moors had invested that term lingered in the so-called Christian theology of Spain. It originated the Spanish Inquisition in the very years in which the government of that country's colonies was taking shape. It justified barbarities in the administration of that government, and even in the propagation of the Christian faith, that the clearer vision of a later day sees to be quite out of harmony with the Christian spirit. Secondly, the Indians of Mexico were to the governing Spaniards of alien race. Race hatred was not so acute in the commingling which took place in that country as it has been in many others, yet it was never wholly absent. In the third place, the Indians were helpless. Only one or two tribes of them had



developed a warlike temper, and these had been subdued by the overwhelming superiority of European arms. The remainder were, almost without exception, pacific and timid. They yielded to their oppressors without resistance, almost without protest. Not to abuse a situation like that, where the ownership of fertile lands and of princely deposits of minerals is involved, is not in human nature, least of all in Spanish human nature.

The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, especially of the great religious orders within that Church, made haste to enter upon the undertaking of converting these gentle pagans to the true faith. In this the soldiers, having altogether mechanical notions of the nature of true religion, cheerfully assisted. They even made it a pretext for new campaigns of conquest, and had the assurance to adorn the banners which waved over some of their bloodiest and most inexcusable ventures with the cross of the gentle Christ. The story of their manner of promoting the cause of Christianity is enough to bring a blush to the cheek of any Christian who reads it.

The missionaries, it is true, were often, especially in the beginning, self-denying and devout men. They were a little narrow, to be sure, and broke up idols and destroyed records that would be of inestimable value now had they been preserved. Some of them, notably Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, became ardent and fearless champions of the Indians and their rights as against their oppressors. A Mexican paint-

er, in a powerful canvas which now hangs in the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City, has paid tribute to las Casas as the "Protector of the Indians."

Unfortunately the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and its practice of the monastic system, are not calculated to perpetuate gentleness and justice in the administration of missionary affairs. The teaching of implicit obedience, for example, paid under vows by the monks to their superiors and under the whip of the confessional by the converts to the priests, is one which tends powerfully to the corruption of human nature. In addition to this, the rivalries of the different orders in Mexico made each greedy of property and of power; and the result was soon seen in such a concentration of the wealth of this new and fecund country within the establishments of the monastic orders as permanently to disturb its peace and well-being. As early as 1644 the city council of Mexico City forwarded to Philip IV. of Spain a formal petition to allow the establishment of no more convents and monasteries in New Spain. The document declares that there were already so many monks and nuns there that they were quite out of proportion to the total population; besides which, there seemed to be great danger that they would get possession of all the property in the country, of which *they already owned half*. It goes on to request a special order to the bishops that they should ordain no more priests, since there were already more than six thousand who were absolutely

without occupation; and that steps should be taken to diminish the number of holidays, of which there were two or three each week, a state of affairs tending greatly to the increase of laziness! This naïve petition unhappily received no notice on the part of the court of Spain, a neglect which was afterwards bitterly atoned for by all concerned. The activity of these religious orders resulted finally in a total of one hundred and seventy-nine monasteries and eighty-five nunneries. The Franciscans led, with fifty-two out of the one hundred and seventy-nine; the Dominicans had thirty, and the Augustinians twenty-six.

The vicegeral period in Mexico, though so long, was singularly uneventful. The administration of Mexican affairs during that period derived its character from the two influences most potent in Spain, the Spanish monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church. Both these were cast in molds so fixed that for three hundred years their variation was insignificant. The viceroys came and went. They rarely held the position more than four or five years, though, as has been remarked, no attention was paid by the Spanish crown to the limits once or twice set. A humane and popular man, with a diplomatic talent equal to the task of keeping down complaints against himself, might remain a dozen years. Usually, however, they returned voluntarily, or were recalled, after terms averaging about four years.

It seemed to be considered one of the perquisites

of the position that the viceroy should enrich himself. He was absolute master of the financial administration of a rich and productive province. His establishment was an expensive affair, to be sure, but his salary was forty thousand dollars a year. By farming out the taxation, selling special grants and privileges, and, in spite of constant surveillance, occasionally tampering with the bookkeeping, most of them managed to make the office a productive one and to retire from it rich.

The viceroys were in more or less constant controversy with the aristocratic land and mine owners and with the haughty chiefs of the Catholic hierarchy in Mexico. Early in the history of that country a most pernicious system of peonage originated. When the land was divided off into grants by royal decree,—regardless, of course, of the rights of the Indian owners,—with each grant native laborers to a certain number were assigned to the favored citizen—“commended” (*encomendados*) to him that he might educate and Christianize them. As might have been guessed, given the hard-hearted avarice of the average Spaniard of that time and his crude notion of the nature of conversion to Christianity, this system almost at once degenerated into slavery, pure and simple. In the same way the laborers in the mines virtually belonged to their employers, who controlled their food supply, administered their courts of law—such as they had—and represented to them that ominous and invisible power across the

sea which they hated but feared to resist. The Catholic Church, in this matter, as in many others, set a melancholy example which those who accepted it as monitor were glad enough to follow. Vast architectural piles, churches, colleges, convents, monasteries, crowded each other in every city—almost in every village—built by the unrequited and forced labor of timorous converts. Huge supplies of candles and other accessories of the religious ceremonials were constantly contributed by indigent worshipers, only to be resold in the market and thus made to enrich the priests and friars.

The enslavement of the Indian mine laborers and the melancholy situation of the *encomendados* were the occasion of numerous and pointed protests to the Spanish crown on the part of generous-hearted ecclesiastics, and even of viceroys. The whole system of *encomiendas*, so often denounced, was finally abolished by royal authority, an act which, though it prevented the further extension of it, operated very slowly indeed to interfere with the feudal pride of men who controlled previous grants of docile slaves. Nevertheless, in places, mining regions especially, where the abuse had become particularly heinous, or where there was a dogged and perhaps eloquent prior or bishop who took the Indians' part, there were from time to time outbreaks of justice highly creditable to the Spanish crown and to the viceroy of the period. A few of these viceroys were so considerate of the native population, and so resolute in pro-

moting their interests, that their names are embalmed in history with epithets fragrant yet of a people's gratitude. At the very beginning were two of this type, Don Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy, and Don Luis de Velasco, the second. Mendoza was so careful of the interests of the Indians, especially in connection with a plague which broke out during his period, that they called him "Father of the Poor." Velasco, who died in 1564, was universally mourned as the "Father of the Country." It was during his term that the Emperor Charles V. issued express orders that there should be no more *encomiendas*, and that those already granted should expire with the death of the men to whom they had been made—that is, should not be inherited. This order, as we have seen, was not immediately carried out. On a certain occasion, however, Velasco took advantage of the royal attitude toward this subject to liberate one hundred and sixty thousand slaves, mostly miners, with the noble remark that "the freedom of the native Indians was worth more than all the mines in the world, and that the royal share in the income of these mines [one-fifth] was not so important as to justify the breaking of all law, both human and divine."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REVOLUTION BEGUN.

THREE hundred years after the Spanish government had asserted its sway in Mexico, it was shaken off by that country. The immediate cause of this successful revolution was the Napoleonic intervention in Spain. How that disturbance served to promote and bring to a crisis the feebly stirring sentiment in favor of liberty and independence in nearly all of the Spanish American countries is a story that has perhaps never been adequately told. It will be sufficient here to give an outline of it in so far as it concerns Mexico. The essential phases of the situation are really few, though both in Spain and in her American colonies the political and social movements of the first two decades of the nineteenth century seem infinitely complex.

The success of the political revolution in Mexico may be explained by a single statement: It became possible when the Catholic Church was alienated from the Spanish government. All other influences making toward independence would have come to naught without this final and decisive element. The uprising under the lead of Hidalgo in 1810 failed utterly, though, as later transpired, events in Spain so affected the situation of Mexico that this abortive movement there became in fact the beginning of ul-

timate independence. But so great was the wealth and influence of the Catholic Church, so thoroughly had the people of Mexico and other Latin American countries been trained in the habit of loyal submission to that Church, that so long as the Church and the government of the mother country acted in concert there was not the slightest likelihood that any movement toward independence from Spain would succeed. It is true that the success of the English colonies in North America, which had set themselves up into the independent United States, and the far-reaching influence of the sentiments which had culminated in the French Revolution, had agitated even the submissive populations of Spanish America. These dim strivings of patriotism would doubtless have been even more pronounced than they were had the indigenous races been allowed to attain to that advanced and enlightened intellectual condition to which their number and their native intelligence entitled them. For it was among them especially that the love of country was essentially linked with the love of liberty, and to them that freedom and patriotism seemed one and the same thing.

But so systematically and so successfully had the ecclesiastical power combined forces with the political and the social that the Indians, after three hundred years of so-called Christian training, were as ignorant and as helpless as before the Spanish came. The very language, which had little by little forced out their native dialects, was full of terms that point-



ed out and enforced their inferiority. People of Spanish stock were called *gente de razón*, "rational people," whereas it was commonly accepted as a matter of course that the reason of a *peon* or *indito* was not sufficient to justify any effort to educate him. Judge Ignacio Altamirano, one of the greatest literary critics ever produced by Mexico, used to relate with great glee that he became *gente de razón*, though of pure Indian blood, because his father happened to be appointed alcalde of the village. When that event took place, the village schoolmaster decided that he must teach young Ignacio his letters!

Events that later led to the complete independence of Mexico,—and the story is essentially the same for all the Spanish American colonies,—were taking place both in that country and in Spain, during the years 1808 to 1821. Bearing in mind the decisive influence of the Catholic Church party, which party, so soon as it was alienated from Spain, insured the success of the revolutionary movement, we may undertake in a summary way to run over these movements.

In 1808 Napoleon, following up his dream of world-wide dominion, wrested the throne of Spain from the weakling king, Charles IV., and his even weaker son, Ferdinand VII. In the effort to reconcile the Spanish people to this high-handed measure and to the government he proposed to set up,—putting his brother Joseph on the stolen throne,—he called for a gathering, "junta," of Spanish nota-

bles. The Spanish patriots had been growing increasingly restive under the miserable subterfuge of a government into which their kingdom had degenerated, and this junta, called by Napoleon, became the signal and type for others. Thus came about the remarkable movement known to history as "the Spanish juntas." The men composing these groups presently asserted their right to govern Spain. The juntas entered into treaties with England. They declared war against Napoleon. They assumed control of the colonies, Mexico among the rest. They demanded liberal concessions from Ferdinand as a condition of his restoration to the Spanish throne. They quoted from the utterances of the French revolutionists high-sounding principles concerning the rights of man. Most of their members were openly hostile to the Catholic Church.

As the nature and purposes of these juntas gradually percolated into the thought of the colonists, great anxiety was awakened, and with it, among the conservatives at least, great resentment. The Viceroy of Mexico, Iturrigaray, announced the change in the home administration, July, 1808, and required the Mexican people to submit to the demands of the "junta central" at Sevilla, at the same time proclaiming his loyalty to the dethroned house of Bourbon, and especially to Ferdinand VII. He seems to have been under the impression that the junta was working entirely in the interests of Ferdinand as against the French.

It soon appeared, however, that the juntas had many things in view besides the replacing on the throne of the deported Bourbons; and when their intentions concerning reforms, popular government, and the like, became known, the viceroy found himself between two fires. For the Ayuntamiento of Mexico, which had never recognized any power but that of the King of Spain, with whom it was accustomed to deal directly, flatly refused to have anything to do with the juntas. In this the people, loyal to the crown, supported the Ayuntamiento. Some suggested that it would be a good arrangement to have Ferdinand come to Mexico, but the confusion and uncertainty were so great that a plan for this did not then take shape. Meantime the viceroy, trying to carry water on both shoulders, excited the suspicion of the Audiencia, made up as it was of ardent royalists, and was by them imprisoned and sent in chains to Spain. For a time his place was taken by temporary substitutes, but in 1810 Venegas, duly authorized by the Junta Central, made his appearance in Mexico and took command of the situation. His disagreement with the Ayuntamiento, and with the large loyal element in the population, of which the leaders of the Church were the guiding spirits, would have reached an acute stage very promptly had not events of a most stirring nature in the politics of Mexico drawn away the attention of all concerned from the situation in Spain. For a time the question was not whether Mexico should be on the side of

Ferdinand or of the junta, but rather whether or not she should break all connection with Spain. To the events which brought about this crisis we must now for a moment turn.

From the beginning the Spanish administration of Mexican affairs had, at least from the Mexican point of view, exhibited grave defects. Every abuse of sovereign power of which the colonists in Virginia and Massachusetts complained was duplicated south of the Rio Grande. To them were added many others. The native population had, as we have seen, suffered much from various forms of slavery. One peculiarly exasperating development of this kind has not been mentioned. Various individual Spaniards, or associations of "Conquistadores," as they rather insultingly called themselves, obtained from the Spanish crown monopolies of sundry articles of primary necessity. By placing an exorbitant price upon these products they soon managed to have a large number of natives constantly in their debt. The old savage laws concerning debtors, in vogue then throughout the world, were even more savage in Mexico. The creditor virtually owned the debtor. For a poor man, a laboring man, getting into debt was equivalent to selling himself into slavery. And industrial slavery of this kind is really worse than domestic slavery, for if the slave is a chattel his owner will take care of him so that his value may not diminish. But nobody cares whether a peon lives or

dies. He cannot be sold, and his place, if he dies, can easily be filled.

The government also had certain monopolies—salt, tobacco, and gunpowder among them—besides one-fifth of the income of all the gold and silver mines, the sale of civil and ecclesiastical offices, a stamp tax, and a poll tax exacted only of the Indians. The king also demanded a share of the immense income arising from religious rites for which the people paid the priests vast sums. In addition to all these abuses, the viceroys and their subordinates deliberately planned to return to Spain rich after even a brief administration, a thing which nobody seemed to think amiss. Indeed, the viceroyalty was much sought as a means of recouping the fortunes of decayed aristocracy. What financial burdens all this imposed upon the productive population of Mexico may be imagined. The people were also forbidden to compete with Spain by raising grapes or olives, or by erecting factories for the production of any article important to the manufacturing interests of the mother country. Moreover, Mexico could neither buy nor sell in any market save that of Spain, from whose ports all her shipments had to come and to them all her exports be sent. The disastrous effects on commerce of such laws need not be described.

In the summer of 1810 a little company of patriots banded together in the city of Querétaro to discuss plans for freeing Mexico from Spain. The move-

ment seems to have had no immediate connection with the disturbances then taking place in the Spanish government, but to have been a growth from slowly accumulating sentiments of patriotism and from the stirring of the principles of popular liberty then so generally sifting through the thought of the world. The group was made up of men in the various walks of life,—two of them soldiers, a pair of lawyers, a physician, some merchants, etc. They were not generally Indians, or even *Mestizos*. The Creoles—that is, Mexican-born Spaniards—had been so much discriminated against by the government, and were so commonly looked down upon socially by the governing classes and the “old Spaniards,” that they had come to identify themselves almost entirely with the other elements in the native population. They held themselves above the Indians, of course, but at the same time felt themselves to be Mexicans and not Spaniards, a feeling which is very pronounced among them at the present time.

The Querétaro group, knowing how important it was to conciliate the Church, and feeling the need of an intelligent leader, made advances to Father Hidalgo, curate of the little village of Dolores, some seventy miles to the north of their city. Hidalgo had been educated at the Colegio de San Nicolás, in Valladolid (now Morelia), the oldest college in America. He was a progressive and philanthropic man, and had been much annoyed by the interference of the government with his efforts to teach his parish-

ioners horticulture. He found the restriction as to grapes especially annoying, having already taught his people silkworm and bee culture, besides establishing a factory of earthenware and otherwise advancing their worldly interests while ministering to them in spiritual things.

Hidalgo having convinced himself by a visit or two to Querétaro that the new movement gave promise of a favorable development, at length agreed to be the leader of it, and with the others began systematically to plan for an uprising. In the city of San Juan de los Lagos, situated in the same rich and populous state with Dolores, the state of Guanajuato, there is a yearly fiesta in the month of December. Thinking to take advantage of the throngs which would be in attendance upon it and could easily be drawn into a movement for independence, it was arranged to spring the movement at that place and time. But in September one or two members of the band of conspirators, through motives which history does not disclose, gave information to the government of what was going on, together with the names of all concerned. The local representative of the Spanish government in Querétaro, holding the office of *corregidor*, was Don Miguel Dominguez. Without actually having given his name as an adherent, he was aware of the existence of the conspiracy, and friendly to it. His wife, an even more ardent patriot, also had knowledge of the whole movement. But when the conspiracy was formally and openly

denounced to him, Don Miguel was forced reluctantly to take steps to arrest his friends. Locking his wife in their home for fear her zeal might outrun her prudence, he set out on September 14, 1810, to nip the revolution in the bud. Mrs. Dominguez, however, was a woman for whom a mere lock and key signified little. She managed to call to her window a reliable policeman, himself inclined to the revolutionary cause, and sent him flying to Dolores to warn Hidalgo.

The priest himself, however, had been betrayed by a hired agent, a soldier of the regiment then stationed at San Miguel, a neighboring town, who had given information to the commander there. Hearing rumors of this, Hidalgo had sent for Captain Allende, the chief mover of the conspiracy, who lived in San Miguel (since named for him), and the two were at Dolores in consultation when the news from Querétaro arrived. Aldama, the messenger, reached that village a little after midnight of September 15, 1810, and found Allende. Together they went to Hidalgo's room in the early hours of the morning of the 16th, and woke him. Having heard the definite news, he arose to dress himself, saying coolly: "Gentlemen, we are in for it. There is nothing for us to do but to set out on our hunt for *gachupines*"—a slang term for Spaniards.

The priest's loyal friends and supporters in the village were hastily sent for, and in the cool September dawn a group of men, humble laborers and farmers,



whose names Mexican history proudly preserves, soon gathered about the *curato*. The village prison was forced and the political prisoners set free. It was Sunday morning, and when the parish bell<sup>1</sup> called to mass it rang out a call to liberty which echoes yet. For when the people came they learned what was going on, and the patriot priest lifted up his ever-memorable “grito” of “Viva la Independencia!” Thus dramatically was launched the movement which, though it seemed soon to be blotted out in blood, never stopped till Mexico was free.

Of that first outbreak, so unformed, so premature, without military organization or equipment, without programme, and with a more or less visionary ecclesiastic as leader, the wonder is not that it failed, but that it came so near to success. The explanation, aside, of course, from the tremendous momentum of sentiment in favor of independence, is to be found in Hidalgo’s shrewd instinct by which from the very beginning he made it the cause of the Indians against the foreign invader. On that first Sunday, marching with his straggling mob in the direction of San Miguel, where with Allende’s help he hoped to get hold of a few soldiers, as they passed the little village of Atotonilco and swept up the villagers who had gathered to mass, the patriot spied in the church a banner bearing the image of the Indian Virgin of Guadalupe. Snatching it down from the wall, he

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<sup>1</sup>It now hangs over the door of the National Palace in Mexico City, and is rung once a year at midnight of September 15.

waved it before the excited multitude as their ensign, and to the cry of "Long live the independence of Mexico!" he added another, to them even more intelligible and inspiring, "Long live our Holy Mother of Guadalupe!" Thus the enterprise of the Catholic Church, which nearly three centuries before had supplied Mexico with a Virgin indigenous to the soil, contributed in an unexpected way to the well-being of the country by making it possible to combine religious enthusiasm with patriotic fervor. To the battle cries suggested by Hidalgo the people soon added another and ominous one, "Mueran los gachupines!" Death to the Spaniards! In San Miguel a whole regiment of soldiers, the "Queen's Own," was added to the mob of peasants, besides a welcome increase of arms and supplies. The people were armed with scythes, machetes, pikes, slings, and even hoes. On the 18th of the same month of September they swept on southward to Celaya, which was occupied on the 21st without resistance, and sacked by the mob. Here an effort at organization was made, Hidalgo being appointed captain general and Allende lieutenant general.

From Celaya the expedition turned back to the northwest to invest the capital city of Hidalgo's state, Guanajuato, only a short distance across the mountains from Dolores. It was, as it is still, a city of much wealth, having then a considerable garrison of Spanish soldiers and a sort of customhouse and treasury building of great strength, but badly situ-

ated for defense. The commander of the troops, having heard of the revolution, had as early as the 17th begun elaborate preparations to defend the city, calling on the people to rally to the help of the government. This they did at first, but within the two weeks which elapsed before the arrival of the patriot army they had learned more of its objects and character, and their ardor as defenders cooled. But the Spanish commander haughtily refused when called upon to surrender, and on September 28 was attacked by the revolutionists with such fury that he and his people were forced almost immediately to take refuge in the *alhóndiga*. From the neighboring slopes—the city lies in a narrow mountain gulch—poured such a storm of stones hurled by slingers that defense of the walls soon became impossible, the gate of the fortress was fired, and the invaders swept everything before them. Riaño, the Spanish commander, fell early in the engagement. During the night the city was plundered, but the next day Hidalgo published general orders reestablishing the Ayuntamiento, or city government, and repressing disorder under severe penalties. Availing himself of the resources of the city, he began to take serious measures for the success of his movement. He ordered the establishment of a cannon foundry and commenced to gather arms and supplies. Two weeks later he set out for Valladolid (Morelia).

Meantime, as may well be supposed, the vice-regal government was in a ferment. Venegas, the viceroy

of the juntas, had just arrived. He was an energetic man, and at once issued orders to General Calleja, in San Luis Potosi, to go after the rebels with all the troops at his command. The government's army in Mexico was at the time made up of about ten thousand regulars and some twenty thousand provincial militia. The viceroy set a price on the heads of Hidalgo and Allende, and the archbishop of Michoacán anathematized his renegade priest publicly and by name, the Inquisition following suit. Hidalgo replied in a spirited proclamation, declaring himself a loyal Catholic still and calling on the people to awaken to their rights as freemen.

To all appearances the people heeded him rather than the viceroy and archbishop. On his way to Morelia nobody resisted him, and the city itself fell into his hands without objection. His following now numbered probably one hundred thousand. He took possession of \$400,000 which he found in the royal treasury at Valladolid, persuaded the ecclesiastical authorities to remove the disabilities of himself and his soldiers, and published a proclamation abolishing slavery and the poll tax. These measures gave him immense popularity with the Indians, and his army swept on unopposed toward Mexico.

On the high ridge between that city and Toluca, the rim of the valley of Mexico, he met the royalist troops sent out to oppose him. While trying to arrange with them for a parley the battle broke out, and the viceroy's troops were soon disastrously de-

feated. There was nothing to hinder the advance of the revolutionists upon the capital, but for some reason Hidalgo hesitated a day or two and then withdrew northward. His action has never been fully explained. It must have been due in some measure, at least, to the timorous shrinking from bloodshed of a man unused to war. This battle was his first, and, though won by his troops, seems to have filled him with dismay.

Near Celaya he encountered Calleja, hastening to the relief of Mexico, who promptly attacked and routed the insurgents. Hidalgo went to Morelia and Allende to Guanajuato. Calleja followed Allende and, defeating him again, captured that city. Hidalgo soon passed on to Guadalajara, where he was made welcome. The revolutionary movement had spread through the whole country. There he undertook the organization of a civil government, appointed ministers, and sent messengers to the United States. But the royalist troops, concentrated under Calleja, were again approaching. The following of Hidalgo and of Allende, who had again joined him, was not much more than a mob. They went out to meet their enemy and again met defeat. The leaders made their way out to Aguas Calientes, thence northward to Zacatecas, and on to Saltillo, from which place they set out for Monclova. Hidalgo had been persuaded to give the supreme military command to Allende,—a thing he ought to have done at the beginning,—and they were again finding

sympathizers in all quarters. It was only a question of obtaining supplies and arms, and they could soon gather another army. But on the way to Monclova they were betrayed by a young lieutenant, disaffected because Allende had refused to advance him in rank, and taken as prisoners of the royalist troops to Chihuahua. There the local Spanish commander promptly condemned them by court martial, and they were executed, about midsummer of 1811. Their heads were carried to Guanajuato and exposed on the famous *alhóndiga*, where they remained for ten years. The first chapter of Mexico's revolution thus came to an end.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE REVOLUTION CONSUMMATED.

How much more wisely Hidalgo was building than he knew appeared after his capture. In the four months that intervened between that capture and his execution another revolutionary army had been formed, and two or three important victories won by it. When Hidalgo set out on his fatal trip from Saltillo to Monclova he left in command at Saltillo Don Ignacio Lopez Rayón, who, when he heard of the disaster to his chief, almost immediately started to make his way back toward the central part of the country. His troops numbered between three and four thousand, and on their way south they met and defeated several detachments of the royalist army, capturing a good many field guns and a quantity of supplies. The rich and important city of Zacatecas received the patriot army with open arms, an event which awoke the representatives of the Spanish government to the fact that the revolutionary ideas had much more vitality than they had suspected. Indeed, this is the most noteworthy phenomenon of the troubled and uncertain years which followed Hidalgo's death. In the hearts of the common people the sentiment of liberty burned like a quenchless flame. No sooner were the patriot armies defeated and scattered

than new recruits filled the depleted ranks as if rising from the ground.

Rayón, threatened at Zacatecas by Calleja, sped away again to the south, fighting by the way and usually defeated,—at “el Maguey,” “la Tinaja,” and Valladolid, which city he failed to capture. Penetrating still further into the mountains of Michoacán, he took possession of Zitácuaro, and there, on August 19, 1811, called a “junta” of four men—himself, Liceaga, Verduzco, and Yarza—which issued a proclamation and became a nucleus for the congress of Chilpancingo two years later.

This reappearance of a governing center for the revolution was joyously welcomed by the warrior priest Don Jose María Morelos, whose daring and breathless activity had for nearly a year been carrying terror to the Spanish forces all through the south. A little dark-faced Indian, who had obtained his theological training after years of manual labor and poverty, partly under Hidalgo while the great patriot was rector of the Colegio de San Nicolás, Morelos, when his old teacher came back to Valladolid at the head of an army, was curate of a near-by village. When he hastened to join the revolutionary movement, which exactly suited his tastes, Hidalgo, instead of taking him along on his march toward the capital, sent him flying southward with orders to gather troops and, if possible, take possession of Acapulco, a port on the Pacific coast. Sallying forth alone and without resources, the martial priest so



successfully carried out the orders of his superior as to enroll his name among the really great military leaders of the world. His exploits, if detailed, would make a romance as thrilling as any ever born in the imagination of genius. Without actually capturing Acapulco he kept it in a more or less constant state of siege, while at the same time systematically terrorizing the whole region south of Morelia to the coast.

Morelos, having united his counsels with those of the junta, left Rayón secure, as he thought, in Zitácuaro, a place of great natural strength, to await the attack of the royalist army under Calleja, while he, dividing his own forces, made vigorous demonstrations against Acapulco, Toluca, and Oaxaca, and even threatened Mexico City itself. But Calleja, whose savage conduct after his capture of Guajuato had earned for him the title of "the Cruel," easily routed Rayón, captured and devastated Zitácuaro, and once more dissipated the rallying center of the Independents.

But the fire of revolution, instead of being stamped out, was only scattered. It continued to burst into flames on every hand. For two years the warfare was scattering and guerilla-like, but often heroic. The siege of Cuautla, where Morelos resisted the whole vice-regal army for seventy days and then withdrew with all his troops, was an exploit worthy of any general and time. Not less so was the conduct, on a critical occasion, of one of his subordi-

nates, Don Nicolás Bravo. The government having captured the father of this officer, Don Leonardo Bravo, a brave and active patriot, Morelos offered in exchange for him eight hundred Spanish prisoners. The offer was refused. The prisoner was given choice between death and allegiance to Spain. Proudly refusing to take the oath, he was murdered by means of the degrading *garrote*. Whereupon Morelos, who was of iron temper, ordered Don Nicolás, son of the murdered man, to execute three hundred Spanish prisoners in reprisal. The prisoners were paraded and the order of the commanding general read to them in the presence of the insurgent troops. "Now," said Bravo, "I do not choose, even when ordered to do so, to imitate the wretched example of my enemies. I prefer a different kind of vengeance. I not only spare your lives, but you are free. Go." This "insurgent vengeance," as it was called, produced a profound impression.

Two years after the Zitácuaro junta, Morelos, who had but lately captured both Oaxaca and Acapulco, secured the assembling in Chilpancingo (now the capital of the state of Guerrero) of a still more representative congress or council. This was in September, 1813. The congress consisted of forty delegates, elected wherever the insurgents were in control, and appointed by Morelos from other sections. It included the members of the previous junta, and besides them, Jose María Cos, Carlos María Bustamante, Jose María Murguía, Jose Manuel de Her-

ra, and other famous patriots. As an example of the respect he wished paid to the body, Morelos promptly surrendered to it his military command, only to be at once elected by the congress captain general of all the insurgent forces. After something like a month of deliberation, the congress issued a manifesto consisting in part of a declaration of independence for Mexico and in part of a defense of the insurgent cause in the war then in progress. Among the curious and contradictory features of this document, which is chiefly interesting as an example of how liberal ideas grow, are its declaration that the war which the opponents of the Spanish government were then waging, was in favor of Ferdinand VII., to whom they affirmed their loyalty, and its assertion that the insurgents were the true supporters of the Holy Catholic Church, and that if successful they would not admit into Mexico or tolerate there any other form of worship. It is to be remembered that in those years the Spanish government was in the hands of the Cortes, a liberal body instituted by the juntas, which had made sweeping reforms in the matter of religious toleration, abolished the Inquisition, and otherwise reversed the traditional policies of the Spanish monarchy. Several members of this first Mexican congress, and a number of the chief military leaders up to that time, were priests. These facts will in part explain the statement made earlier that the real secret of the success of the Mexican

revolution was in the ultimate identification with it of a strong Catholic sentiment.

But that which was even dearer to the Indians who composed the insurgent armies than their devotion to the mother Church was the dream of freedom. The Chilpancingo congress spoke out boldly concerning the right of Mexico to independence. Its members appealed in defense of their contention to the very recent uprising in Spain against the French intervention. Little by little, by the slow processes native to the manner of life of that day—all the slower among a people of contented temper and slight enlightenment—the sentiment of freedom was making its way.

Venegas had been substituted in the viceroyalty by Calleja, who represented to the common people the very essence of scorn and cruelty. They might not understand the intricate politics of Europe, where just then Napoleon's power was tottering to its fall; they certainly could not make out why good priests like Cos and Morelos were fighting for the Guadalupean Virgin, while the archbishop and the Inquisition in Mexico were launching anathemas against all who opposed the viceroy, but they could understand the thought of freeing themselves from the exactions and cruelties of men like Calleja. And this was to them a very sweet thought. Thus it came about that as fast as the insurrection was put down it broke out again. And even though its leaders sincerely wished to keep the movement loyal to the Catholic monarchy

of Spain, they had nevertheless set in motion forces which they could no longer control.

But Calleja, an able military leader, and now armed with all the prestige and resources of his position, pressed the insurgents hard. Opportunely came the news that Napoleon had replaced Ferdinand on the throne of Spain, who in turn had re-established the Inquisition, made tatters of the constitution devised by the Cortes, and inaugurated a truly Spanish régime. This was after Calleja's own heart. Overlooking completely, therefore, the loyalty of the insurgents to the puppet king while he had been fawning about the feet of Napoleon, he availed himself of the king's abrogation of all constitutional guarantees and began to make cruel havoc of such rebels as fell into his hands. One of these, ere long, was Morelos, who, anxious to preserve the congress, which had meantime become a vacuous and useless company of figureheads, exposed himself to capture on a certain critical occasion in order that its members might escape. He was loaded with chains, carried to Mexico, condemned by the Inquisition, which Calleja had put again into operation, and, for fear of the effect on the people, secretly executed in a village just outside the city, December 22, 1815. This was probably the last auto-da-fe of the Inquisition, that baleful institution having forever disappeared within a short time thereafter.

The insurgents were still numerous but scattered. An ambitious general, Mier y Terán, dissolved the

congress, and thus broke up the last nucleus of an administrative center. In 1816 Calleja gave place as viceroy to Don Ruiz de Apodaca, a reasonable and conciliatory man. Nothing in the succeeding year availed to draw together the disintegrated forces of the revolution, and the kindliness of Apodaca, and especially his disposition to favor the Creoles and Mestizos, brought many of the disaffected to take again the oath of allegiance to Spain.

A romantic episode of the otherwise quiet year of 1817 was the meteoric campaign of Don Francisco Javier Mina, a brilliant and bold young Spanish liberal of noble family, who, disgusted by the march of events in Spain, landed on the northeast coast of Mexico with a few companions, quite a number of them Americans, captured three hundred horses, and set out on a campaign in aid of the revolution so successful as to be fairly incredible. Reckless, watchful, fearless, indefatigable, he eluded or defeated every expedition sent in pursuit of him, and for half a year flashed like a meteor from mountain range to mountain range, from city to city, through all the central part of Mexico. Captured at last and shot, he left a name and a story which warm the heart and brighten the page of Mexico's historians to this day.

For three years the flames of revolution only smoldered. Then again from Spain came a blast at which they burst once more into a far-flashing blaze. Ferdinand's foolish and childish absolutism had

proved too much for even patient Spain. Napoleon, his protector, had gone into eclipse. The people rose up and thrust the constitution of 1812 into his very face. The Cortes assembled, and he made before it a pusillanimous and hypocritical address, agreeing to all that the liberals demanded and professing sentiments he by no means felt. If Spain seethed with these movements, Mexico was worse. The last prop was at last knocked from beneath the loyalty of the aristocratic Church party. They were willing to support a Catholic government, but this new Spanish constitution, with an angry people behind it, struck at the dearest "rights" of the Church and its priests. At last the leaders of the Church party in Mexico were ready to join hands with the common people and cut loose from Spain. They still clung to their pet, Ferdinand, and part of the new plan was to have him leave Spain, where he was so much abused, and come to set up a truly Catholic monarchy in Mexico.

A tool was ready to their hand in Don Augustin Iturbide. An ardent Catholic and a soldier of considerable military experience, they managed to have him put in command of the next expedition against the insurgents. Don Vicente Guerrero, one of the undaunted patriots who had kept the field throughout all these years, gradually increasing his band of hardy troops, had made such rapid progress during 1820 that in the latter part of that year he was even venturing to threaten the capital. Iturbide was sent

against him with the flower of the royalist army; but instead of fighting, he opened negotiations, and disclosed to the insurgent leader a "plan" which he and the aristocratic leaders in Mexico had concocted. It proposed the union of all the forces then favoring independence from Spain for the promotion of that cause and the protection especially of religion. "Union, independence, religion" were to be guaranteed, symbolized by the green, white, and red flag which had just been devised, and which still flies as Mexico's banner. Iturbide declared that the majority of the troops under him were ready to accept the plan and to fight if necessary for these "tres garantías." The offer was joyously welcomed by the revolutionists. Guerrero yielded the supreme command to Iturbide, the troops of the opposing armies and their leaders held a love feast, and the news went flying among scattered and despairing patriots from the Gulf to the Pacific Ocean. The viceroy cajoled, bribed, threatened, wheedled, but could do nothing, and in disgust resigned and went home to Spain. He was succeeded July 30, 1821, by Don Juan O'Donoju, sixty-fourth and last Spanish viceroy, who died within a few months, having virtually agreed to the proposals of the united revolutionists, and having never attained in Mexico to other than a nominal authority.

So acute was the quarrel in Spain during those years, between king and people, and so debilitated the mother country with her internal disturbances,



that not much could be done by her to break the strength which now came to the cause of Mexican independence through the coalition between the Old Catholic and the Insurgent parties. So soon as the Spanish Cortes heard of O'Donoju's acquiescence in the revolutionary "plan," they repudiated it and denounced him as a traitor. But this served no purpose further than to register their protest. They had neither the men nor the money to enforce Spain's claims.

Thus at the last, after so much of travail, almost without effort and absolutely without bloodshed, Mexico became independent. But fifteen years were yet to lapse before Spain, reluctant still, acknowledged that independence and forgave her wayward daughter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### EVOLUTION OF THE REPUBLIC.

THE fifty years that followed Mexico's final rupture with Spain witnessed two abortive attempts to establish in New Spain the monarchical form of government. Both failed for the same reason: they were crushed by the weight of the sentiment in favor of popular government. The "Plan of the Three Guarantees," usually spoken of as the "Plan de Iguala," from the name of the village where it was first publicly announced, provided for the calling of a constituent congress which was to devise a monarchical form of government over which a prince of the house of Bourbon should be invited to reign. Ferdinand VII., however, to whom this offer primarily referred, did not care to make the venture; and besides, the Cortes had somewhat to say concerning the necessity of his remaining in Spain. No other Bourbon prince seems to have been available. The congress, of about one hundred members, met in February, 1822. The Spanish element supplied one of the three parties of which it was composed, but this party were much set back by the news of Spain's rude repudiation of the whole movement. A sort of *pro tempore* government had been set up in which Iturbide and others acted with O'Donoju, the deposed viceroy, up to the time of his death. The two

other parties were, first, the adherents of Iturbide, who had already conceived the idea of substituting him for the proposed Bourbon prince, and who called themselves "Iturbidistas"; and, secondly, the Republicans, who openly favored a popular government.

Three months after this rather nondescript body began its deliberations, in May, 1822, the soldiers stationed in the city—whether at his instigation or not, is not known—"proclaimed" Iturbide emperor, and fairly stampeded the city. The congress found itself bullied out of countenance by popular clamor, and by a vote of seventy-seven to fifteen agreed to the demand of the soldiers and made the young Mez-tizo colonel "emperor." In March of the next year he abdicated the throne, and was forced to leave the country. The story of his "empire" is amusing and pathetic rather than tragic. He was an amiable and vain young man, really devoted to his country, but not of the stuff emperors are made of. Besides, the people were in no mood to trifle with the toys and gilded shows of a puppet royalty. They had serious business on hand and were serious men. The patriot Indian element and the wealthy and privileged classes, hereditary foes at best, were already closing with each other in that death grip of a struggle, concerning the kind of a government the country was to have, which did not cease for fifty years. The congress had succeeded in placing a loan or two at most disadvantageous rates, one in England and one in France, destined later in the century to become the

storm center of foreign intervention. This money was, however, rapidly dissipated. After the abdication of the emperor, the supreme power was placed temporarily in the hands of a governing board of three. Congress banished and pensioned Iturbide, and adjourned.

In November, 1823, another congress was summoned, and the work of formulating a constitution seriously undertaken. About the same time President Monroe announced his famous doctrine warning European governments that they were not to interfere in American affairs. This no doubt contributed not a little to the cause of Mexican independence, since Spain, at the instigation of the Holy Alliance, was at the time seriously considering the reconquest of her American colonies. This congress was divided into the "Federalist" and the "Centralist" parties, names which of themselves do not signify a great deal, since the Centralists corresponded to the Federalists in the early history of our own country, and the Federalists were Republicans. It was the old cleavage between the native and the Spaniard, the poor and the rich, the progressive and the conservative. It has not disappeared from Mexico to this day.

All winter they debated the constitution, the Republicans holding up the example of the United States as an ideal, and their opponents showing only too truly the many and grave differences between the situation in Mexico and that in the American colo-

nies forty years before. In January a tentative basis, consisting of twenty-six articles, was adopted, and by October of the same year, 1824, the constitution itself was framed, adopted, and proclaimed. The Federalists had triumphed at most points, and the document was modeled in large measure upon the constitution of the United States. The provisional agreement had declared that the government was to be "popular, representative, federal, and republican." But the Centralist party was able, backed by the inertia of a situation in which nobody really knew what to do, to force the insertion of two provisions which were to be fruitful of mischief. One declared the Catholic religion to be official, and that no other would be tolerated; the other perpetuated the religious and military *fueros*. This word describes an inheritance from the dark days of the Middle Ages when warrior and priest were masters of the world. The *fueros* were the vested right of soldiers and churchmen to be tried by courts instituted by their own orders instead of by the law of the land. It was a much-coveted distinction, to which both orders clung long and desperately, though its inconsistency with popular government does not need to be pointed out. The constitution of 1824, though virtually never in full force, served nevertheless, twenty-three years later, as an excellent basis for that of 1857.

The newly constituted republic consisted of nineteen states and five territories. The constitution provided that the president should be elected by the vote

of the state legislatures and for a term of four years. Don Felix Fernandez, who had recently adopted the rather boastful name of Guadalupe Victoria, describing his devotion to the Virgin and his prowess in war, was the candidate of the Federalists, against Don Nicolás Bravo, put forward by the Centralists. Victoria was elected and Bravo became vice president. Thus at last Mexico was free, with a duly constituted civil government. The conflict between the opposing parties went on. Private ambitions and jealousies among the leaders resulted in great bitterness of feeling, and the recently introduced order of Masonry added fuel to the flames. The first lodges formed were of the Scottish Rite, brought from France, and were identified with the wealthy Spaniards and the Church party. Presently, however, an accredited minister of the United States brought authority to establish a York Rite jurisdiction, which he did in connection with the strict Republican or patriot party. When secret, oath-bound societies meddle in politics, disaster usually results. "Escoceses" and "Yorkinos" long survived in Mexico as rallying cries, the symbols of much bitter feeling.

Victoria was the only president who served out a constitutional term under the instrument of 1824, and his wound up in a bloody wrangle. Nicolás Bravo, Vicente Guerrero, Guadalupe Victoria, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna—names all of them made notable by the part their bearers had taken in freeing

the country from Spain—together with other able and ambitious military leaders, now began that petty struggle among themselves which was to keep the country in a turmoil for nearly fifty years. It is an intricate and tedious story, and depressing withal. The most prominent figure in it for many years was Santa Anna, a man of considerable military ability, but so despotic in his temper as to be absolutely unfit for any position of civil authority. His only conception of a government for his country was a dictatorship, with himself as dictator. Once or twice even when he had tired of governing—for which, indeed, he had no real taste—and retired to the privacy of his country estates, he seemed to think it perfectly proper any day the whim seized him to assume again the reins of absolute power.

It was during this period of virtual anarchy that the unfortunate but unavoidable war with the United States occurred. The citizens of the Mexican state of Texas, who were largely Anglo-Saxons, weary of the irregular and unsatisfactory mode of government, and desiring closer affiliation with their relatives in the United States, asserted their independence in a glorious war for liberty. By the time they were ready to apply for admission into the Union, Mexico, realizing what she had lost, made a fierce effort to stop the movement, only to lose before the war was over far more of territory than that originally involved.

Ten years after the war with the United States,

the patriot party at last began to take those decisive steps so long needed. Partly impelled by the poverty of the government and partly because of dear-bought insight into the real cause of the persisting vitality of the reactionary party as against free and representative government, Gomez Farias, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Benito Juarez, Melchor Ocampo, Guillermo Prieto, and their immortal companions in the final desperate struggle for liberty, laid hands on the treasures and vested rights of the Church. In 1855, while Juarez was for a time in the cabinet of President Alvarez, as Minister of Justice, he formulated the first of the "reform laws" annulling the *fueros* and declaring all citizens equal before the law. A year later followed the fiscal decree of Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Secretary of the Treasury, nationalizing all mortmain property—that is, property acquired by people then dead in such a way that it could never be alienated. Most of it was held by the several religious orders. The Jesuits and Franciscans resisted, and were promptly expelled from the country and their vast properties seized. These things, of course, consolidated the Church party against this new movement toward republican government.

Suspecting that their constitution was radically defective, and seeing that it had long been disregarded, the patriot party decided to formulate a new one. This was done in the autumn of 1856, and it was adopted February 5, 1857. It embodied the principles as to the rights of man promulgated by the



French revolutionists, and was based, as to civil institutions, largely upon the constitution of the United States. The fierce denunciation of the reform laws by the Archbishop of Mexico, and the unalterable hostility of all the leaders of the Catholic party to the abolition of the *fueros*, to the confiscation of Church property, the banishment of the monks, and the freedom of worship, convinced Juarez and his associates that they were going to have to fight the Church party in any case, and they decided that they might as well make a clean sweep of it. This they did. But within a year Mexico was plunged into a bloody civil war, which continued for ten years and included as one of its tragic episodes the uncalled-for intervention of the French emperor and the brief and fatal reign of Maximilian. But neither the foreign invader nor the retrograde party at home could quench the undying devotion of the Mexican people to the ideal of a free and popular government. Out of the smoke and dust of civil war, triumphant on the ruins of the enforced empire, emerged the republic.

## CHAPTER X.

### CATHOLICISM AND REVOLUTIONS—IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO.

HAVING hastened through our outline of the shifting politics of Mexico during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, we shall find it instructive to go again over the same period, making a more intimate study of some of the intellectual movements of which these kaleidoscopic political changes were the outward expression. The rapidly succeeding revolutions which marked the early history of independent Mexico, and which unfortunately still characterize the effort at self-government of other Spanish American countries, are not due, as some would have us suppose, to the "natural incapacity for self-government of the Spanish-American peoples," nor wholly to the unregulated ambitions of their military leaders. These are, no doubt, contributory causes, but they themselves have their origin in, and obtain their potency for harm from, the same great underlying cause, namely, the hostility of the Catholic Church to popular government. This hostility is a legacy of the Church from its golden age, and though it may be on occasion veiled, and is often flatly denied, it exists nevertheless, showing itself in just that degree which the temper of any people or government will permit. The traditions of the Cath-

olic hierarchy are autocratic. Unquestioning obedience is with it a fundamental tenet. If, therefore, a people who for three hundred years have been carefully trained by that hierarchy not to think for themselves, and taught that virtue is wholly in obedience and subserviency and not at all in boldness or initiative, displays afterwards as a consequence of that training some degree of unreadiness for the responsibilities of self-government, is it not invidious to call such a state "natural incompetency"? It may be incompetency, but it is not natural; it is acquired. The nation so situated deserves sympathetic good will from those who were better trained, not contumely.

In the same way, the mischievous potency of the unrestrained ambitions of leaders,—ambitions which have so often plunged Mexico and other Spanish-American states into war,—is to be traced directly to the readiness of the Church party to develop and avail themselves of these ambitions. The priests and their associates do not exactly create them, to be sure. But after a few experiences, the common soldier is not ready to follow every new hero who springs up with a patriotic *pronunciamiento* against the existing government simply for glory. He had rather stay at home and plow his field or wield his saw and hammer. What will tempt him to fight? Money; nothing else, especially when the issues as to patriotism are so nicely balanced that only an expert could decide on which side duty lies.

That it was the money of the Church which fitted out the expeditions that made havoc of the liberal government in Mexico so often as that government began to settle down to business, will be perfectly evident to any one who cares to go into the details of the country's history. Mexico stopped this intermeddling at last. This she accomplished by the effective measure of removing at one stroke the wealth which had been the source of the Church's power. Since that time the country has had peace. Other struggling republics may have to profit by her example.

There was never a time in the history of any of the colonies of Spain when the leaders of the Church were willing to let the government alone. Often, it is true, they interfered to the advantage of the people. Archbishops, bishops, vicar generals, abbots, and even friars and priests, often made the lot of the representatives of the Spanish crown an unhappy one. Their power over the people was so absolute, and their following so blindly devoted to them, that in a crisis they could count on the support of practically the whole population. The viceroys and captains general did not, it is true, take much account of the people; yet nobody cared to govern a province and be at the same time the best hated man in it.

Almost as soon as the independence of Mexico had been secured, the conservative or monarchical party regretted it. They had counted surely on securing Ferdinand VII. to be king of New Spain, and even

Emperor Iturbide, fervent Catholic that he was, did not satisfy them. His "empire" fell still farther short of pleasing the hardy patriots who had supposed that independence and liberty were synonymous, and who had little mind to see all their sacrifices and bloodshed result merely in the substitution of one autocrat for another. This grim and patiently persistent fidelity to the republican ideal has been a feature of Mexico's history from that day onward. The distaste for popular government on the part of the Catholic leaders has been no more deep-seated than has been loyalty to freedom among the masses of the Mexican people. So ineradicable has been this loyalty on the one hand, and so incapable has the conservative party shown itself on the other, of freeing the governments set up by its representatives from the practices and attitude of an odious tyranny, that for almost a century, while the resources of the two parties were more or less evenly balanced, it seemed impossible for either to manage public affairs in a way satisfactory to the other.

The balance of power in the hands of the Church party was soon found to be due to its immense wealth and its compact organization. It had always been a sort of *imperium in imperio*. Its authority was exercised quite independently of that of the state. Separate and special tribunals for its officials, with awards of penalties and immunities in which the state dared not interfere, and a complete financial system with an immense revenue and a manner of

accounting independent of all outside observation, placed the Church in a position to dictate terms to any government which might affect to disregard its wishes. Arrayed against this venerable and powerful ecclesiastical machinery, with its spiritual sanctions and its awards and punishments not confined to earth but reaching also within the veil, were first, the progressive and intelligent patriots who, having studied the science of government and the needs of their country, had espoused with unfaltering devotion the cause of religious and political liberty. With them were, secondly, the native instincts of the great mass of native Mexicans, confused in their minds, it is true, by the opposition to their course of the venerated Church and its priesthood, yet loving liberty with all the ardor of their untutored nature, smarting under numerous and long-inflicted tyrannies, and blindly devoted to their beautiful native land which, despite the long-continued occupancy of the foreigner, they instinctively believed to be theirs by right. The Creoles and Mestizos fluctuated, now joining themselves with great enthusiasm to the patriot party, and again, unable to grasp the ultimate purpose of its leaders, or by reason of some step on their part peculiarly offensive to the clergy, rallying to the priests not less heartily, always subject to the seductive persuasion of good wages and loot.

With such constituent elements, the revolutions in Mexican government are seen to have been both intelligible and inevitable. Following this clew, some

sort of sequence may be traced in that weary succession of disturbances which long vexed that country and which still puzzles students of Central and South American politics. For though the pope has kind things to say about strong republics, like France and the United States, in all countries where republicanism is still weak and struggling the Church will be found arrayed against it. If a Santa Anna be put forward by the conservatives as their choice for president, it will very soon be found that it is because his ideal of government is the same as theirs, and that once he is elected, instead of abiding by the constitution he has proclaimed himself dictator. This fashion of changing a constitutional presidency into a military dictatorship, to meet emergencies, is one which, unfortunately, commends itself to men of ambitious temper, even though they have been put forward by the patriot party. It has thus come to pass in such countries as Venezuela and Colombia that tyranny on the part of the man in power is the rule, whether he be a liberal or a conservative.

Nevertheless the Catholic party must bear the odium of having set the baleful example, and of having reduced the people to such a state, through its management of their spiritual and intellectual affairs, that they are really not able to carry the burden of a representative government. It is something of a puzzle to make out why, at least in the realm of practical politics, the Catholic hierarchy should prefer the autocratic to the democratic form of govern-

ment. In no other countries in the world is that Church so truly prosperous as in the United States, England, and France. Where its people have been raised by popular education to an intellectual level such that public sentiment forbids and even makes impossible that immorality and indolence of the priesthood and those idolatrous superstitions on the part of the people which are the disgrace and the burden of Catholicism in purely Catholic countries, that Church takes its place with others in a sphere of respectability and Christian activity such as at once to win the esteem of the outside world and to increase the vitality and promise of the Church itself. And, in particular, a government like that of the United States, which avowedly eschews all intermeddling in ecclesiastical affairs, offers a field for the development of the Church far preferable to that under some autocratic ruler whose assertion of his divine right to rule in all things constantly brings him into collision with pope and bishop. Such a statement appears axiomatic, yet, strange to say, in France, in Spain, in Austria, in Mexico, in South America,—everywhere, indeed, where it has been able to wield its influence,—the Catholic Church has stoutly set itself against religious freedom, even against anything bearing the semblance of political freedom.

The explanation of this contradictory and ultimately futile attitude must be sought mainly, as would appear, in two considerations. First, in the affinity which an autocratic hierarchical system natu-



rally feels for a political autocracy. All the wranglings between emperor and pope, king and bishop, viceroy and vicar general, which have filled the world with their din for a thousand years, have not sufficed to eliminate the natural affinity existing between civil and ecclesiastical autocrats. Rome still believes tyranny to be the ideal government.

Not less powerful is the second consideration, which is the fear that the enlightenment that comes with a liberal and popular government will cause the people to grow out from under the power of the priests. A traveler in the West Indies who fell sick of a tropical fever there says that during his convalescence his black nurse constantly admonished him, *Ne pense pas, ne pense pas!* That is the ideal of the papal system in dealing with men: "Do not think, do not think!" The priest will do all the thinking and the praying; he will read the Bible, solve the problems of life, open the gate of heaven, bear the whole responsibility of salvation. A liberal government must set up schools, must open avenues of commerce with the world, must bring its people up to the level of competition with other modern peoples. From the point of view of Catholicism, all this is anathema. That Church opposes the public school everywhere. In Mexico it fought the railways and the factories and the telegraph as so many devices of the evil one. Thus it came about that the hostility between the thoughtful patriots and the Catholic party there waxed hotter and hot-

ter as it became increasingly evident that if either triumphed it would be by the defeat and the elimination of the other. After nearly fifty years of the constant setting up and bowling over of constitutional governments, the liberals at last in desperation took a step so radical that it brought on the final, bloody, exciting, and decisive struggle. That drastic measure and its consequences, dramatic, tragic, vastly significant, must occupy us in another chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE REFORM LAWS AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1857.

THOUGH the phrase in the chapter preceding this which describes the final desperate measure of the liberal party as a single step is in a sense correct, it is true, nevertheless, that there were several distinct elements in this decisive movement. It had one purpose, to break the power of the Catholic party. It proceeded to accomplish this in two ways—first, by attacking the Church's exclusive prerogatives and compact organization; and second, by removing its wealth. Both these were destructive measures. They excited much bitterness at the time, and even yet many writers are unable to describe them without using the language of harsh disapproval. It is to be admitted, too, that the constructive work has not yet been completed, though the history of Mexico for the last forty years shows that it has been ably begun.

The two measures—that is, the abolition of the *fueros*, those civil and judicial prerogatives of the ecclesiastics and the soldiers, the doing away, in brief, of privileged classes; and the sequestration or nationalizing of ecclesiastical property and the breaking up of religious orders—were both, at least by implication, embodied in the new constitution,

adopted February 5, 1857, and promulgated a week later. Both had, however, taken form earlier and, with certain other enactments, gone before the country under the general name of *Leyes de Reforma*, or reform laws. The assertion of the principles involved in them, to wit, that no classes should have special rights before the law and that overgrown monopolies should not be allowed to congest in their coffers money needed for the public welfare, may be traced respectively to Benito Juarez and to Valentin Gomez Farias.

Juarez was a jurist by temper and training. During a term as governor of his native state of Oaxaca he had formulated a code of laws for that state—the first Mexican code, it is believed, ever proclaimed. A little later, banished by the overweening jealousy of Santa Anna, then dictator, he was forced to spend more than a year in the United States. This time he employed (at New Orleans) in a careful study of the laws and principles underlying our free institutions; so that when he was, after a few years (in 1855), appointed chief justice, under President Alvarez, he promptly formulated a law for the better “administration of justice.” This law struck a deathblow at the *fueros*, under which, ever since the Middle Ages, ecclesiastics and soldiers had enjoyed the privilege of trial for crime by special courts of their own order. How grave and far-reaching an encroachment on popular liberty such special privileges are can scarcely be conceived by those who

have never known anything but strict equality before the law. The ecclesiastical courts, especially, were even more of a farce than the courts-martial, and the exemption of members of religious orders from any adequate punishment for crimes, to say nothing of misdemeanors, was a source of constant and acute exasperation to the common people. These *fueros* were one of the worst of many evil fruits borne by the Catholic doctrine of the special sacredness of the priesthood.

Priests, friars, and soldiers banded together in a furious resistance against the attack on their precious prerogatives. But, though the conflict was long and sanguinary, the law stood. It was not merely the sturdy "little Indian" who was warring against these hoar anachronisms. The tide of enlightened modern sentiment, the on-coming avalanche of the Rights of Man, bore down upon these crumbling monuments of feudal days and crushed and buried them forever.

The other measure, equally vital to the republic and equally odious—perhaps even more hateful—to the Church, the nationalizing of Church property, was not devised out of hand like the abolition of the *fueros*. As far back as 1833, Gomez Farias, one of the ablest financiers Mexico ever produced, suggested as a possible mode of meeting the financial crisis to which the defenders of the government had come, the sequestration of some of the vast holdings of the Church. The Church, he said, gets the full benefit

of the government's protection, yet, though she is rich while all others are poor, she contributes nothing to the government's aid. Again in the emergency of the war with the United States he made a like suggestion. The Church authorities, instead of meeting these intimations with a voluntary offering, listened to them with cold disdain. After a sharp debate in congress, however, this second effort of the great financier took the form, in 1848, of a forced loan from the Church to help meet the expenses of the war that had just closed.

By this time Gomez Farias was beginning to feel the burden of age. In Benito Juarez, Melchor Ocampo, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, and other ardent young patriots, he had found, however, faithful disciples. These took up the conflict where he left off. The straits of the Church party brought Santa Anna, temporarily disgraced by his failures in the campaigns against the Americans, back to power again. With the singular fatuity which ever afflicted him when dealing with civil government, he promptly proclaimed himself not president, but dictator. This was in 1853. He compromised with the leaders of the Church party as to this forced loan, and thus solidified them in his support. But the very name of dictator was hateful to the majority of the people, and in a short time the patriotic element rallied once more in such force that Santa Anna was driven again into exile, and Juan Alvarez, an old but patriotic general, placed in the presidential chair. It was as min-

ister of justice under him that Juarez brought out his reform law for the administration of justice.

Alvarez gave way in the autumn of 1855 to Ignacio Comonfort, who was at the time supposed to be a staunch liberal, and as such had been elected president. He appointed Lerdo de Tejada his secretary of the treasury, and within a very short time this disciple of Gomez Farias brought to the cabinet his project for the confiscation and sale of mortmain properties. This law was in imitation of similar enactments on the part of nearly all European governments. In Mexico, as elsewhere, it lay almost wholly against the Catholic Church and its several religious orders. These were virtually the only holders of property that could rightly be classified as mortmain. The law was approved by the cabinet of Comonfort and passed by the liberal congress. But Comonfort himself, whether bribed thereto, or because of natural timidity, began to waver in his assertion of liberal principles. The Church party, already aroused by the abolishment of the special ecclesiastical courts under the law of Juarez, were driven to even fiercer resentment by this attack on their property.

Meanwhile, during the same year, 1856, the constituent convention or congress was laboriously hammering out a new constitution. Its members freely admitted that this was to be cast largely upon the basis of the constitution of the United States of America. That involved precisely most of the principles underlying the reform laws that had just

been promulgated, though they had not yet been carried into effect. In spite of the half-hearted backing of the president, the document, when finished, in 1857, was adopted by an almost unanimous vote of the body that had framed it. The aged Gomez Farias, amid the reverent applause of the whole assembly, tottered forward on the arms of his sons to affix his signature to this instrument, the fruition of his fondest hopes during a long and strenuous life. The principle of equal rights before the law was, as a matter of course, included as fundamental in the constitution. The loss of the Church's special prerogatives and of the right of its priesthood to support by taxation was also implied in that instrument, which made no mention of a state Church and declared that worship should be free (Art. 9). The entering wedge on the subject of property was in the form of a brief statement (Art. 27) that no corporation, civil or ecclesiastical, should hold real estate, except such as is strictly necessary for its own purposes. The instrument is altogether an admirable one, a monument to the men who formulated it.

Upon the proclamation of the constitution the gathering storm of opposition broke. Comonfort was not a sufficiently resolute man to face the conflict which all saw was inevitable, and was torn with conflicting emotions by the distress of his mother, an ardent Catholic, to whom he was deeply devoted. The champions of freedom had at last laid hands upon those time-honored abuses which had hitherto



thwarted all their efforts, and proposed to sweep them out of existence. The wealth and intelligence and close organization of the ecclesiastical opposition party, backed by the blind devotion of the great host of adherents of the Church, made a most formidable combination. Comonfort, weakly yielding for a time, enough to throw the control of affairs at the capital of the republic and most of the machinery of the federal government into the hands of the conservatives, at last found his position between his own cabinet and the enemies of the constitution so uncomfortable that he slipped out of the country and was lost to the struggle. This brought Juarez, president of the supreme court, into the presidential chair about the beginning of 1855. Juarez had long held, with Gomez Farias, ideas concerning the property and power of the Catholic Church more radical than any that had, up to that time, been embodied in the legislation. Seeing that the issue was at last joined and that nothing but drastic measures could sustain the liberal cause, one of his first acts was to proclaim on the authority of himself and his cabinet—congress not being at the time in session—a law “nationalizing,” that is, confiscating to the uses of the government, all the productive properties of the Catholic Church. This was in strict conformity with the article of the constitution that no corporation should hold any more property than it needed for its specific purposes. It added to the mortmain holdings which had been sequestered under the law of Lerdo

all the productive real estate and the immense income from mortgages on real estate which made the Catholic Church at that time the possessor, as has been estimated, of at least one-third the total wealth of the country. A little later, during the stress of the war which immediately broke out, these enactments were enlarged and confirmed. They were gathered up and incorporated in a constitutional law a good many years later, known as the Lerdo law of 1874. It was promulgated during the presidency of Lerdo de Tejada,—not Don Miguel, the minister of Comonfort in 1856, but his younger brother, Don Sebastián, who was president from 1873 to 1876. In this final form, modified slightly in 1901, the constitutional law now stands. It allows no Church to hold real estate, unless that real estate is directly and immediately utilized for the purposes of the Church.

The abolition of the religious orders was a measure closely involved with this same church property question. It began in 1857, when, shortly after the promulgation of the constitution, while Comonfort still showed some little energy in its enforcement, a revolution broke out against his government under the lead of the ecclesiastical authorities in Puebla. The president in person led the army of the federal government for the suppression of this revolt. The campaign was brief but bloody and decisive, resulting in a complete victory for the government. Since the uprising had been excited by the bishop of Puebla

and his associates in the Church, the victorious president promptly confiscated and sold enough of the Church property in that state to pay the expense of the campaign. Returning to Mexico, it was reported to him that members of the order of Franciscans, who had a huge and wealthy monastery in the very heart of the city, had been plotting against the government. Suspicious already and not in a mood to be very tolerant of such things, Comonfort promptly issued a decree banishing the entire order and confiscating their property. Through the monastery itself he opened a wide street, which is still called Independence Street. The large chapel which belonged to the establishment remained for a good many years in the hands of the government, and was then bought by a representative of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the use of that Church. It was later, through some mismanagement, thrown on the market, and wealthy Catholics not long since bought back the old church and opened it again for Catholic worship.

During the conflict which began in 1858, and did not really terminate till 1867, Juarez found himself under the necessity of abolishing all the remaining religious orders. The Jesuits had already fallen into ill repute and been banished from a number of European countries. Their organization was so compact, and their general officers so ambitious, that they had been during their century of existence not unfrequently in collision with the pope and the Ro-

man Catholic Church itself. The Franciscans and the Augustinians had been extremely active as missionaries in the early history of Mexico. Their friars had had much to do with conciliating and controlling the native population. As an outcome of their success, and in the same way as has been exhibited in almost every other country where they have had a hold, they had accumulated vast wealth. These accumulations, reacting upon the orders themselves, had served to corrupt them and cause their degeneration. When the question finally arose as to whether they should be allowed to retain this wealth, they were joined as one man against the liberal government. Seeing the power for evil of their close organization and unanimity, President Juarez, whose only aim was the establishment of a popular government, cost what it might, cut this Gordian knot by prohibiting religious associations altogether. That is to say, men and women under vows may live in Mexico, but may not live together in the same house. This radical attack upon a social and religious system which had existed not merely unchallenged, but even approved by government and people, for more than three hundred years, is an example of the methods of this Indian patriot. Now that peace has long reigned and the need of such legislation is not so apparent, the law itself is no longer strictly enforced. It is an open secret that many of the "colleges" and "seminaries" scattered through Mexico to-day are convents of nuns and Jesuits.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE FRENCH INTERVENTION. (I.)

THE French intervention, involving the unhappy reign and death in Mexico of Maximilian of Austria, was but an incident in the great struggle there between conservatives and liberals. It is true that it was a dream of the Third Napoleon, who was in fact much abler as a dreamer than as a ruler. It is also true that it was the realization of a cherished plan of his Spanish wife, an ardent Catholic and a devout believer in the theory that the only right government for any people is a Catholic monarchy. Louis Napoleon wished to see Mexico a kingdom subservient to the world-wide French empire, which he, like his great predecessor, thought himself raised up to found. Eugenie, his wife, wished to see Mexico brought again into the class of devout monarchies ruled by devout ecclesiastics, subservient to the Church in Spain and Rome. But neither of these dreamers would have dared to take open measures to carry out such plans had not the Church party in Mexico itself held out treasonable hands to them.

Just as the enthusiasm for a liberal government under popular and representative forms had persisted in the minds of the patriotic and liberty-loving element in Mexico's population during the whole period since the days of Hidalgo, so during all those fifty

years the Catholic party in that country had with equal stubbornness held to its original purpose of making the country a truly faithful kingdom under a believing and properly approved monarch. There had scarcely been a day during all those years when some representative of the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Mexico was not diplomatically feeling about in Europe for a man who might become king of Mexico. The thing may seem absurd to the reader of these lines, and, indeed, in view of all the developments on this side of the Atlantic during the past hundred years, it is absurd; yet it did not so appear to these conservatives. Their instincts were wholly aristocratic. They had no faith in the people, and believed democracy to be essentially hostile to religion, if not atheistic. The archbishops and bishops who constantly bestirred themselves concerning this matter were but following therein the illustrious example of their predecessors, who, through all the history of New Spain as a Spanish province, had constantly kept its viceroys in hot water by their interference in civil affairs. The Roman Catholic Church has never had any mind to accept a separation between Church and State.

There can be no sort of question that Maximilian was only persuaded to undertake the precarious venture of establishing an empire in Mexico when convinced that the real leaders among the Mexicans themselves desired it. An ingenuous and open-minded young man, while a narrow Catholic he was in no

sense a tyrant in his temper, and had not the slightest disposition to embark upon the enterprise of governing a people entirely unrelated to himself, unless it was in answer to a demand of the people themselves. It will be sufficient to touch briefly here upon the manner in which Napoleon shrewdly inveigled England and Spain into a seeming support of his enterprise of interference. While he was secretly persuading Maximilian to accept the venture, and arranging with the Catholic party in Mexico to present the invitation to him in such a way as to make the impression that it was the unanimous wish of the whole Mexican people, he was arranging with England and Spain to make a demonstration against Mexico ostensibly for the purpose of securing the payment of her obligations.

There were some bonded debts held in these several countries that had been drawing interest for a good many years. When the collision first began between Juarez and the Church party in 1858, the conservatives, by the carelessness or treason of Comonfort,—historians are not agreed as to which it was,—held the capital city and controlled the principal resources of the country. Juarez was barely able to assemble and provision the troops that were needed to protect the threatened constitution and the tottering republic. In an unguarded moment, and to meet the emergency of a dark hour, he issued, in 1859, a proclamation suspending temporarily the payment of interest on these foreign obligations.

The men who held the bonds in France and England and Spain raised a great outcry. The English government, prompt as it always is to defend the interests of its citizens, began measures for the dispatching of an armed demonstration in order to convince the government of Mexico that it must pay its debts. At this juncture Napoleon interposed, suggesting that France, Spain, and England make common cause, but concealing from both Spain and England his real purpose.

The plan was agreed upon. The three governments sent their war vessels to the coast of Mexico, and France took occasion to dispatch along with them transports carrying a small army. Representatives of the government of Juarez explained the situation to the entire satisfaction of the official sent along with the English warships, and entered into a compact with him to resume the payment of interest and to provide for the refunding of the debt so soon as it was possible. About the same time the English government discovered what Napoleon really was working for—that is, the usurpation of the Mexican government by means of his tool, Maximilian—and promptly and rather roughly denounced the treachery, declaring that England would be no party to it. The Spanish government also, having made a satisfactory agreement concerning the money question with the ministers of Juarez, withdrew from further coöperation and retired its vessels. Meantime, the



designs of the French emperor became a matter of common knowledge.

It will be necessary, however, to go back for a moment in order to trace more minutely the events which in Mexico itself led up to the situation existing in 1864. During 1859, 1860, and 1861, the war between the generals who supported the government of Juarez and the constitution of 1857, and those who were under the direction of the Church party, continued with great bitterness. After the flight of Comonfort at the beginning of 1858, the conservatives established a government in Mexico of which Zuloaga was for a time the leader. Several states to the north meantime formed a coalition and raised an army to support the constitution. This army was defeated at Salamanca, March 8, 1858; and for the constitutionalists thereafter disaster followed disaster. Only Vera Cruz, where Juarez had taken refuge, held out. Generals Miramon and Marquez became the leading spirits of the conservative party, Miramon occupying a so-called presidential office for two or three years. The sympathy of the mass of the people with republican principles gradually strengthened the cause of Juarez as the war progressed. Many citizens emerged from the state of indifference into active partisanship with the patriots goaded by the inexcusable cruelties of the clerical leaders. Marquez, especially, was guilty of so many and such atrocious murders that his name is execrated to this day in the country which he lived

but to disgrace, and where he died a few years ago, old, poor, decrepit, forgiven by a generous government, but unpardoned by an outraged public.

Again and again Miramon, who was an able military leader, menaced Vera Cruz, but it remained impregnable. During the existence of this short-lived and futile conservative government, it negotiated a ruinous loan at the hands of a Swiss banker named Jecker, an obligation that afterwards figured largely in the quarrel between France and Mexico as an alleged *casus belli*. All that it produced, and all that the conservatives were able later to wrest from the people in forced loans and otherwise, was at last exhausted, while the ragged patriots, instead of diminishing in numbers, seemed to increase. Under Generals Gonzales Ortega, Degollado, Berriozabal, Zaragoza, and others, the constitutionalists kept up the fight, becoming bolder and bolder and not at all dismayed by an occasional defeat. In December of 1860 Miramon staked all in a great battle with Ortega, and was overwhelmingly defeated. He lost his artillery, his army was annihilated, and he himself barely escaped from the field with a few followers. Returning hurriedly to Mexico, he turned over all authority remaining to him to the *Ayuntamiento* and left the country. January 1, 1861, Juarez entered his capital in triumph.

During that year the French troops were landed in Mexico. The government at once entered into an agreement with the envoys who accompanied them,

representing France, Spain, and England, that these troops should only occupy certain specified points, pending the negotiations concerning the financial questions which had brought about the invasion. These negotiations were not very lengthy. A settlement satisfactory to Spain and to England was, as has been stated, soon reached, and their war vessels were withdrawn, all the sooner, indeed, because in both these countries the purpose of Napoleon began to be suspected, and the public and the opposition members in parliament began to ask uncomfortable questions. Napoleon's plans being not yet mature, he was almost at a loss for an excuse to keep the soldiers in Mexico till the time should arrive for his *coup d'état*. Some of the pretexts he made use of were a good deal like those the wolf urged against the lamb in the fable. As a witty speaker in the French parliament said in debate, "First it was declared that we must invade Mexico because Mexico is calling for us; now it is to punish her for not calling for us!"

The stubbornness with which the French troops persisted in remaining on Mexican soil after the others had retired but confirmed Juarez in his already well-grounded suspicion that Napoleon had designs on the independence of Mexico. The astute president could not fail to have information of the manner in which the Mexican conservatives were playing into the hands of the invader. Profoundly stirred by the treachery of this attack on his coun-

try's freedom, and foreseeing but too clearly the bitter conflict which was inevitable unless it should be soon checked, Juarez issued early in 1862 a proclamation warning both Mexicans and foreigners against taking part in this attempt on the nation's liberty, and declaring that all who disregarded his warning placed themselves outside the law. It was this proclamation which was later held to warrant the death sentence against Maximilian himself.

In the spring of 1862 Count Lorencez landed in Vera Cruz with a large addition to the French troops, and at once advanced into the interior. By the middle of April hostilities began. The recently defeated conservatives welcomed the French, and in Cordova, which the invaders had taken possession of, "pronounced" against Juarez and set up a rival government with Almonte at its head. At the beginning of May the French advance reached Puebla, where, on May 5, was fought the most famous battle in Mexico's history. To the surprise of everybody concerned, the ragged peasant army of the patriots defeated the French veterans. Zaragoza, the Mexican general, could not hold his ground, and later temporarily retired, but the fact remained that the Mexicans had proved the French not to be invincible. The country thrilled with patriotic pride at the news, and scarce a city in the republic is today without its street or plaza called "Cinco de Mayo" (Fifth of May).

For nearly a year Puebla interposed a barrier to

the French who had been driven back from its gates. Then, after a long and terrible siege by Marshal Forey, it was forced to capitulate, the patriots losing nearly ten thousand men in prisoners, including Generals Ortega, Alatorre, Berriozabal, and others. Ortega's note of surrender is a proud, dignified, and patriotic document, which deeply impressed even his enemies.

Juarez was thereupon driven from his capital, which became untenable when Puebla fell. The French troops and the conservatives occupied it, and the plans for importing an emperor were rapidly consummated. One of Napoleon's pretexts was the Jecker claim. Now Jecker was not a Frenchman, but a Swiss, and the money had not been borrowed by Juarez, but by the conservatives, who were doing all they could to destroy the government of Juarez. Nevertheless, the president, rather than submit to intervention, had at last agreed to assume this debt. Jecker was well protected. He held bonds covering more than twenty-five times the amount of money he had advanced. The whole thing was absurd.

The truth is, Napoleon hoped to get money out of Mexico. He expected to help Maximilian's empire in such a way as to bring it under lasting obligations to himself. Then he counted on colonizing French settlers in the rich mining regions of the country he was attempting to exploit. In it all he seems to have quite left out of his calculations the wishes of the Mexican people,—unless, indeed, he al-

lowed himself to be persuaded by Eugenie that the ecclesiastics who were clamoring for a Catholic monarchy were the true representatives of that people.

The French soldiery and the subservient conservatives set up a quasi government in Mexico. Napoleon's money was paying the wages of foreign troops who were harassing the scattered liberal armies and driving Juarez from one city to another, further and further north. By this time there were nearly fifty thousand French soldiers in Mexico.

An "assembly of notables" consisting of two hundred and thirty-one members, representing ostensibly every Mexican state, was called together in Mexico City, July, 1863. It adopted an "act" declaring in favor of the monarchical form of government and offering the throne to Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria. Several representatives of the conservative party, then in Europe, were appointed a committee to make the official tender to Maximilian, and if he failed to accept, to any other European Catholic prince *whom the emperor of the French should designate*. To the surprise of everybody, Maximilian replied to the committee that he was unwilling to go to Mexico unless invited by the people of that country. The matter was therefore referred back to Marshal Bazaine, then in command of the French troops in Mexico and the virtual head of the conservative government, and a vote favorable to Maximilian of all the prominent cities then "occupied by the French bayonets" was promptly secured.

Maximilian, upon news of this, declared himself satisfied. He at once signed a compact releasing his claim to the Austrian throne (he was a brother of the present Emperor of Austria), and another with Louis Napoleon, the latter exhibiting but too plainly the animus of the wily Frenchman. It was a contract that from the income of the Mexican empire should be returned the money advanced to pay Maximilian's debt on his palace at Miramar and for the expense of his voyage to Mexico, the outlay for the French troops in Mexico, the Jecker claim, etc.—in all amounting to one hundred and seventy-three millions of dollars; a good round public debt to hang about the neck of an infant empire.

This was in April, 1864. By the 29th of the following May the new emperor with his wife Carlota had arrived at the port of Vera Cruz, and the curtain rose upon a great modern tragedy: in the month of June, 1867, just three years later, it was rung down. Maximilian was dead and Carlota insane.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FRENCH INTERVENTION. (II.)

HAVING traced with some particularity the events that led up to the intervention in the affairs of Mexico of the French emperor and to the setting up of the so-called empire of Maximilian, it will not be necessary to follow the history of that empire in detail. From the point of view of Maximilian, the whole thing proved a ghastly mistake. But Maximilian was amiable rather than able. He was as deficient in real acuteness of mind as in firmness of will. From the beginning he allowed himself to be victimized by the designing Napoleon and the reactionary party in Mexico, the latter availing themselves in influencing him of the sanctions of the Church. Caught in the vortex of a deadly struggle between warring elements among the Mexican people, his sympathies were rather with those who opposed than with those who supported him. He was especially unhappy in the selfishness, the avarice, the cruelty, and the retrograde political theories of those who surrounded his court and became his advisers. It was also his unenviable lot, a foreigner himself, to depend for the stability of his government upon hiring foreign troops, execrated by the Mexicans and themselves by no means enamored of the task that had been set them.



Besides these essential weaknesses of his situation he was opposed by the bull-dog tenacity of Juarez and the natural instincts of virtually the whole Mexican people. The moral strength of this resistance was, early in the struggle, vastly increased by an ill-judged procedure upon Maximilian's part. In the autumn of 1863 it was reported to him that Juarez had crossed the border into the United States. This, according to the constitution, forfeited his right to the presidency. He had indeed been careful not to take the step, but Maximilian doubtless believed the report which came to him. Instigated probably by Bazaine, he promulgated therefore, October 3, 1863, a decree to the effect that all persons found in arms against the empire, now the only existing and rightful government, should be treated as rebels and, after trial by court-martial, be put to death. Almost immediately several prominent officers in the insurgent army, Generals Arteaga and Salazar and Colonels Diaz and Villagomez, were captured at Uruapam and executed. The French troops were commanded by their officers no longer to take prisoners, but to put the vanquished to the sword. These measures naturally produced a tremendous reaction.

The empire had no income worth speaking of, and from the first began to sink into hopeless bankruptcy. When the close of the Civil War in the United States left the American government free to turn its attention to the manifest affront to the Monroe doctrine of which Napoleon had been guilty, and

with a great army of veteran troops at hand to enforce its demands; and when the conviction was at last forced upon Napoleon himself that Mexico was not the gold mine he had imagined it to be; and when also the patriot army, rallying from the defeats that had marked the beginning of this last struggle, began to press hard upon the heels of the retiring French troops, it was plain to be seen that the toy empire was doomed.

The rapidly shifting panorama of Mexico's interior affairs during the dark days when our own country was beginning slowly to recover from her gigantic and bloody struggle is one of the romances of history. The glittering court of Maximilian and Carlota, who seem now like children playing with gilded toys upon the edge of an abyss; the cynical double-dealing of Napoleon, as treacherous with Maximilian in withdrawing the French troops as he had been with Mexico in introducing them; the sturdy constancy of the little Indian president, driven from pillar to post, till he was crowded at last against the very northern boundary of the country at Paso del Norte (now named Juarez in his honor), yet stoutly proclaiming himself through it all the true and legitimate ruler of Mexico; the gradual development into deadly efficiency of the ragged patriot forces,—all this is a story well worth the telling, but which I cannot delay here to give at length.

In 1866, hurried thereto by a rough intimation from W. H. Seward, then the American Secretary

of State, and by the presence on the northern border of Mexico of a body of veteran American troops, Napoleon advised Maximilian that he was going to withdraw the French army from Mexico. Foreseeing the inevitable result of this, Maximilian reluctantly agreed that his wife should hurry away to the French court to see if she might prevail upon Napoleon to alter his decision and to keep the "Treaty of Miramar," as it was called. That treaty provided for the gradual withdrawal of the French troops during a number of years. But Napoleon was feeling too severely the pinch of the dead expense of sustaining this army, and rightly dreaded a collision with the United States. His mind was made up. Carlota upon her arrival was treated with such scant politeness, and her pleadings so rudely rejected, that she left Paris the victim of a mania of fear and anxiety which soon destroyed her reason. Her interview with the pope a little later was the raving of a hysterical and already half-crazed woman.

Maximilian, upon the news of this, and witnessing the preparations for the retirement of the French soldiers, was ready to abdicate and return himself to Europe. Well for him had he carried out this thought. Indeed, he did set out for Vera Cruz, having prepared a proclamation in which he abandoned the throne, and went as far as Orizaba. But the Mexican clericals complained, cajoled, and threatened. They appealed to his sense of honor and his supposed obligations to them. The officials of the

Church promised to replenish his depleted treasury from their strong box. A majority of his Council of State refused to accept his abdication. So at last, after several months of vacillation, he returned to the capital.

Failing the French generals, he now welcomed back to Mexico the conservative military leaders, Miramón and Marquez. These men, though attached to his cause, he had hitherto kept abroad on various missions, since their reputation in Mexico was somewhat unsavory. To them he now intrusted the task of reorganizing the imperial army. He selected a new cabinet and, throwing himself into the hands of the Mexican conservative party, prepared to witness the final act in that long and losing struggle which it had waged with the forces of freedom. His wife was already a hopeless lunatic; his brother, the Emperor of Austria, had forbidden him to return to his native land; his mother wrote him insisting bitterly that he perish amid the ruins of his empire rather than longer be a dupe of Napoleon; his dreams of establishing a popular and successful government for Mexico was plainly blighted. Under the stress of these afflictions he bore himself with a manly serenity more creditable to him than anything else in his career.

The funds that had been promised from the coffers of the Church were given but grudgingly. As rapidly as possible the royalist troops were got into some sort of organization. The city of Querétaro,

being a stronghold of the Church, which was at that point very wealthy, seemed to be a favorable place for their concentration. Maximilian, placing himself at the head of the army, took up his quarters there, and the constitutionalists, accepting the challenge, began to concentrate upon this city, famous already as the birthplace of the revolution of 1810. It lacks much, however, of being an ideal place in the military sense for defensive operations. The republican troops, having already cleared the northern part of the republic of their enemies and opened the way for the return southward of Juarez and his cabinet, had been gathered into one body under General Escobedo until they outnumbered the royalists, whom they probably also excelled in military skill and *morale*. This Maximilian himself, with that frankness which was one of his most attractive traits, acknowledged. Writing a short time before to one of his ministers concerning the need of reorganizing his own army, he said of his opponents: "The republican forces, wrongly represented as demoralized and united solely by the hope of pillage, prove by their conduct that they form a homogeneous army whose stimulus is the courage and perseverance of a chief moved by a great idea,—that of defending the national independence which he believes threatened by our empire." In such words he confesses that it was a misconception which gave birth to his ill-advised and most unfortunate decree of October 3, 1863.

Querétaro, after sharp preliminary fighting, was

surrounded by an overwhelming force, and besieged from the middle of March to the middle of May, 1867. May 15, the besiegers broke into the city. Its defenders made a sally, and Maximilian with a few followers attempted to escape. On a neighboring hill, the "Cerro de las Campanas," he was captured, brought back to the now surrendered plaza, and within a few days put upon trial before a court-martial.

The one blot upon the proceedings of the victorious republican government on this occasion was the constitution of this court. It was made up of a lieutenant colonel and six captains, all so youthful as to excite the suspicion that they had been selected in accordance with some plan to insure their verdict. With this exception the proceedings were entirely regular. The charges were treason, filibustering, etc., based almost wholly on the presidential decree of 1862. Miramón and Mejía, the two leading Mexican conservative generals, were placed on trial at the same time and under the same charges. All were allowed able counsel, but all were nevertheless convicted and condemned to death.

Juarez, now at San Luis Potosi, not far away, was pressed to modify the sentence of Maximilian. Telegrams poured in upon him from all over the world. Influential Mexicans and foreigners went post-haste to plead with him in person. His feelings were deeply moved upon, but he remained firm. "The welfare of the people demands it," he replied to every plea; "I cannot set myself above the public

good." To a protest which reached him from South America he replied with some warmth that he was doing as he did not for his own sake, nor even for that of Mexico alone, but for the sake of every struggling American republic. The student of history, however keen may be his sympathy with the unfortunate Maximilian, will probably have to agree that the instincts of Juárez in this matter were sound. He settled for a long time, if not finally, the question of whether it is worth while for a scion of European royalty to attempt the transfer of his authority to American soil.

On June 19, 1867, the sentence of the court, passed five days before, was executed. Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía were taken to the Cerro de las Campanas and shot. They met death like brave men, Maximilian exclaiming, "May my blood be the last that is shed in sacrifice for this country!"

The infamous Marquez had been dispatched a short time before the fall of Querétaro to Mexico for reënforcements. There he gathered a small force and, instead of returning to the help of his chief, employed his time in wreaking private and petty grudges in his usual brutal manner. Meantime Porfirio Díaz had rallied the scattered patriots in the south and laid siege to Puebla, the scene of so many conflicts between royalists and republicans. Before Marquez could come to its aid he had forced its surrender, April 2, 1867; after which he immediately proceeded to invest Marquez in Mexico City. During the in-

terval between the fall of Querétaro and the execution of Maximilian he was slowly pressing in upon this last stronghold of the imperial troops, unwilling to storm the city where there were many adherents of the republic and which he foresaw would soon be forced to surrender. Marquez was at last put aside by others, and by skillful hiding escaped when the city was captured. On June 20, the next day after the death of Maximilian, the capital of his empire was unconditionally surrendered to one of the youngest and one of the strongest of the patriot generals. The intervention was at an end. July 15, 1867, President Juarez, with his cabinet, the "Inmaculados," as they came to be called, quietly entered again the capital of his country.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### WHAT THE REPUBLIC FACED.

FOR the second time in these studies we have thus come to the final triumph of the independent republic over its inveterate foes, at home and from abroad. The coöperation of the Catholic Church with the enemies of a republican form of government became at last so open that it was no longer on either side even a pretended secret. That the strength of that Church as an opponent lay more in its immense wealth than in its hold upon the common people, powerful as this was, became evident to the leaders of the liberal party. From this it came to be with them a matter of public policy to cut the sinews of that strength by annihilating the wealth in which it lay. When to this consideration was added the stern satisfaction of despoiling a powerful, implacable, but at last vanquished enemy, to say nothing of the crying demands of their own impoverished treasury, it may easily be guessed that the work of spoliation was thorough. Gomez Farias, Juarez, Lerdo de Tejada, Ocampo, and the rest, were slow to be convinced that in the confiscation of the Church's wealth was the only hope of the republic; but having at last put their hand to the plow, they did not look back.

While this is true, it is also to be said, to the credit of all concerned, that scarcely ever in history has a

victorious party converted to the uses of the nation so large a booty with so little of scandal attaching to individuals for appropriating to themselves for private use the fruits of public victory. Many a scarred veteran of the patriot army became, it is true, the proprietor of some huge shell of a ravished chapel or of the rambling and thick-walled cloisters of some abandoned convent. But this was always by virtue of a clear title from the federal government, and meant that a poverty-stricken though victorious republic had no other means of rewarding the men whose fidelity and valor had wrested victory from the grasp of foes so numerous and so powerful. Juarez, the great leader, virtually all-powerful after the triumph of his party in 1867, was singularly indifferent to the blandishments of wealth. As he had proved himself incorruptible and unpurchasable in the days of his poverty and threatened defeat, so now he successfully met the still severer test of victory and power, emerging with an untarnished name.

Reconstruction after a period of civil war is at best a delicate and tedious business. In Mexico, when victory over the French brought peace at last, the task of Juarez and his associates was not merely reconstruction—it was rather construction. There had never been a civil government of independent Mexico worthy the name, and indeed, to tell the whole truth, the vice-regal government under Spain had been a good deal of a travesty on the name. While, therefore, at some points in the previous his-

tory of Mexico's affairs our rapid review of them has shown complex and puzzling situations, that period upon which we now enter will be found, if possible, more confusing still. It is simple enough to say that upon the ruins of the Maximilian empire the indomitable Juarez raised the fabric of a free republic, and this the dazzling genius of Porfirio Diaz has, through more than three decades, confirmed and beautified. Such a statement is, happily, strictly true. Yet it by no means tells us all of the recent history of the Mexican people, nor does it disclose those conditions now prevailing in that country, concerning which the intelligent and sympathetic student will wish to be informed. Upon the study of those conditions this and the succeeding chapters will undertake briefly to enter. They must be, therefore, even less strictly historical than those which have preceded.

No matter how ideally perfect a system of popular government may be, it remains dependent for its successful exemplification on the character of the people who adopt it. A single man of genius may be a successful monarch or military dictator. A small group of men, trained in the science of government, may carry on a centralized oligarchy. But if a government by the people is to succeed, the general average in character and intelligence of the people must be such as to fit them for the duties of sovereign citizenship. To be a sovereign citizen is, in other words, a very different matter from being a

subject citizen. It is at this point of the fitness of the citizen that popular governments oftenest meet disaster. Much study has, at one time and another, been given to the elaboration of republican constitutions. But the most beautiful of these instruments will at times refuse to "march." A good workman can pick up a defective or broken tool and with it turn off finished and beautiful products, while in the hands of one who is unskilled and inefficient the finest instruments are useless; the implements themselves are ruined, and the work remains ill done. It is the assumption of sovereign obligations by the citizen whose training and character have not made him a sovereign in spirit that has so repeatedly brought popular government into disrepute.

The best friend of Mexico will not deny that she has run, and is even yet running, a great risk at this point. Indeed, what else could have been expected? Had the hardy and self-reliant Indians whom Cortez found been put at once upon a course of training for it, it is probable that they might very soon have been brought to the point of readiness for self-government. But this was not done. The Spaniards of the sixteenth century exhibited in an uncommon degree that sense of superiority which too often possesses powerful and highly civilized peoples, rendering them oblivious to the human rights and claims of nations less favored. It did not occur to these Spaniards that the natives of Mexico would ever again wish or need to govern themselves. A distorted re-

ligious conception but accentuated the domineering nationalism which made the *conquistadores* indifferent to any rights of the Indians. They looked upon them as subjects of the evil one, to be reduced by any sort of means, fair or foul, to allegiance to Christ and his vicegerent on earth. As to their civil rights, history contains no evidence that their conquerors ever even thought of their having any. So greedy were they and the Spanish sovereign whom they represented of the gold of the New World, that the despoiling of whole peoples of their sacred liberty in the effort to seize it seemed to them but an insignificant incident. Sad as is the spectacle of the religious fanaticism of these invaders, the *auri sacra fames*, which, like the lash of some unrelenting, unforgiving Fury, ever drove them on, is sadder still. In a burst of cynical confidence one of the Spanish leaders on a certain occasion explained to a dignified Indian chief the Spanish thirst for gold. "The fact is," he said, "all our people suffer from a dreadful disease for which gold is the only known remedy."

In these two elements just indicated—the undertaking to convert, *vi et armis*, if necessary, all these slaves of the devil to the service of his holiness the pope, and the exploitation as enemies of the Spanish crown of all who set up any barriers, however slight, to the seizure of their property—began the Spanish régime in Mexico. Had it been deliberately calculated to unfit the inhabitants of that unhappy country for exercising at any future period the privileges and

the responsibilities of self-government, it could not have been gauged with more disastrous accuracy. For to this suppression of individuality in the religious and civil realm was promptly added the social obloquy which could not but follow. Thus in all the three avenues of moral expansion, the development of the Mexicans was hopelessly crushed and atrophied. In the social fabric, wealth and intellectual culture asserted their sway. In civil matters, the iron rule of the despot was enforced by a soldiery equipped with arms and an organization incomparably superior to any known to the Aztec warriors. In the realm of spiritual things, the despotism was even more absolute and irresistible. The Indians believed in the spirit world with that direct and unquestioning faith common to childlike nations. Of the terrors of that future state they entertained not the slightest doubt. Those terrors the priests held in their right hands. The whole life of the poor Indian, from his first faint cry to the moment of the death rattle in his throat, was weighed down by the sense of this spiritual tyranny. He must be baptized in unconscious infancy, confess, pay tithes, build churches, make pilgrimages, etc., all his life; and at the end, no matter how diligently he had kept the Church's rules, be shrived in dying, else all would be in vain. Indeed, he had to see to it besides that his body after death rested in consecrated soil; for all of which he was offered the poor boon of a term in purgatory!

As an accompaniment of these varied forms of oppression—virtually unconscious oppression, be it said, though the merit of the qualification is open to doubt—the denial of the right of the peons or *indígenas* to intellectual training came as a matter of course. It was a question, even, subject to grave discussion, whether they had souls. That they had minds fit to be trained was considered preposterous. To distinguish them from the natives, Spanish and Creoles were called *gente de razón*, “people of reason.” The implication was that the Mexicans were incapable of reasoning. How a stupid notion of this kind could persist in the face of the facts of ordinary and constant observation must be accounted for by the reflection that those were the days of the deductive philosophy. People explained the world by means of previously formed conclusions, instead of formulating the conclusions themselves by observing and classifying the facts of life.

In proof of the intellectual sprightliness of the native Mexicans, facts indeed abounded. Despite the enormous advantages of the invading Spaniards, the Mexicans continued to hold their own in population, as well as in every avenue of competition where the terms were at all equal. They intermarried with their conquerors without injury to the stock, and the Mestizos, or children of mixed marriages, held their own with the domineering “old Spaniards” quite as well as did the Creoles, that is, the people of pure Spanish blood born in Mexico. The careful student

of Mexico's history and of her population, while he will be forced to allow the disastrous consequences of the social and political system prevailing there for the past three centuries, will, nevertheless, discover to his satisfaction that comparatively few of the ills from which that country suffers and has suffered are to be traced to the native defects of the native races. On the contrary, he is likely to conclude that few peoples could have submitted for three centuries to a despotism so complete and so ingeniously detrimental to national character and have emerged so creditably as have the Mexicans. The vitality—physically, intellectually, and morally—of a people who after this long enslavement were able to rise up and break the bonds that had held them, and who through a whole century of stubborn fidelity to liberty have kept on with their disheartening task of shaking off successive series of shackles, is itself the bow of promise for the future. Surely what Mexico may yet have to undergo before attaining to her ideal of a government by the people is less than what she has already undergone.



## CHAPTER XV.

### LEGACIES OF THE SPANISH RÉGIME.

AT the risk of having to set down in plain language some rather distasteful facts, we must proceed to particularize the general indictment of the last chapter. It was there said that had the Spanish régime in Mexico been deliberately calculated to prevent the development of a national capacity for self-government, it could not have been more effective for the purpose than it was. It was not so calculated, of course. Such a contingency as the preference by the Mexicans of any sort of government to the "divine right" monarchy of Spain seems not to have occurred to the political economists of the time. Yet latent in many of the political measures for the government of Spain's provinces was the deep-seated conviction of the Romish hierarchy that democracies are atheistical and irreligious. In those palmy days of the Inquisition, the legislation of the Spanish kingdom took color from the tenets of the Church, and many of the repressive enactments, such as the curbing of free speech, the prohibition of certain industries, and the like, as well as the government's wholesale disregard of its obligation to provide for the enlightenment of the governed, are doubtless to be traced to this age-long hostility of the Catholic Church toward popular government.

That the completeness with which the Mexican people have been defrauded of that training which they needed for self-government may properly appear, let us see for a moment what are the elements in national character essential to the success of popular government. They are few and, like most elements of human character, simple. The nation is made up of individuals. As an aggregate of these it can exhibit no traits which they do not possess, nor any perfection in essential traits which is not first exemplified in a majority of its constituent atoms. The prime requisites for the assertion of national liberty are that men shall know their rights and have the manhood to assert them. This demands both enlightenment of mind and strength of will. But when independence is accomplished and the task of setting up a government under the guardianship of liberty is undertaken, then an even heavier strain is put upon mind and will. Henceforward it is not merely the knowledge of our own rights, but the ability to recognize where they are limited by the rights of others, that calls for an acute and trained intellect. And necessity is now upon the will not simply to resist the encroachments of some tyrant and assert against the world the inalienable rights of man. That is a rôle which, if not easy, is at least congenial. But in a republic men need not only to assert themselves but to restrain themselves. Respect for the rights of others makes constant demands upon their power of self-control. Of the three necessary steps in

the training of the sovereign citizen, this self-control is the last, the hardest, and the most essential.

The training which the Mexicans under Spanish rule received instead of helping them in any of these essential things, hindered them in all. They were not instructed that they might know what are the rights of men. They were not allowed to assert themselves as to anything, temporal or spiritual, that they might develop will power and self-respect. And most especially, being kept constantly in a state of childlike tutelage, they learned little of the meaning of self-control.

Concerning the first count in this bill of charges it is unfortunately possible to speak with but too much assurance. Rome has never counted it a virtue in people to know a great deal, and though the Roman Catholic missions in the Spanish colonies had as one of the agencies of their propaganda schools of a certain sort, neither they nor the government of which they were so nearly a part took these enterprises seriously. The oldest college on American soil, the Colegio de San Nicolás, now situated in Morelia, founded about 1544, was in the beginning a missionary agency for the preparation of Indian candidates for the priesthood. That training, in the conception of its founder, and even more so as carried on by those who took up his work, had little relation to the general subject of the education of the people. It was confined to a small and privileged class, and was, moreover, of a highly technical and

special character. This prototype of American colleges was indeed far too much a type of the sundry seminaries and monastic schools which were later scattered through New Spain. They had no appreciable effect in lifting up and illuminating the masses of the native population. As has been already observed, the Spaniards, missionaries as well as soldiers and civil rulers, doubted whether the Indian had sufficient of either soul or brains to become a civilized man. He was taught that it was a great concession when he was admitted to baptism and declared a "Christian." Otherwise, he would have remained an "animal."

As the centuries crept by, the zeal and the unselfish enthusiasm of the early missionary days died out. The people were virtually all brought into allegiance to the Church. The schools, as a missionary agency, were no longer needed. That they were desirable for any other purpose seems to have occurred to nobody. The people were left in ignorance, and, since they knew no other possibility, it was mostly contented ignorance. How sluggishly this great mass awoke to the stimulation of the ideas of freedom, of independence from the oppression that had weighed upon Mexico for so long, will be recalled by those who have followed even in brief outline the story of Hidalgo's uprising. It is but too evident, even to the casual student, that had not the movement for independence from Spain sprang up in Mexico at a time when the Spanish government

was helpless,—being during no small part of the struggle virtually nonexistent,—it could never have attained to any measure of success. That other and similar and probably successful movements would have followed is quite certain. But it was only the nerveless state of Spain which gave opportunity at the time Hidalgo began his agitation for that slow and long-continued propaganda that at last took hold upon the untrained thought of Mexico's native population.

It was not merely in the failure to provide schools and to intervene directly in the mental training of the Mexican native races that Spain sinned against their intellectual development. That development was hindered, was indeed rendered virtually impossible, by the whole atmosphere in which these races had their first contact with European civilization. They were not allowed to think for themselves in regard to any of life's interests. The Church declined to permit it in religious things, because to think at all exposed them to the danger of thinking wrongly. Orthodoxy was held to be more desirable than intelligence. As the ecclesiastical system gradually departed from that primitive purity of purpose and of interest in the welfare of the people which had marked the early missionaries, it grew into an elaborate scheme of prerogatives and dignities belonging to the priests and bishops, concerning which these dignitaries were excessively jealous and watchful. The due subjection of the people was a matter of first

importance, and the obedience and acquiescence which were exacted of them left nothing to the chance of individual initiative.

Scarcely less autocratic were the social and civil exactions. On every hand the Indian was made to feel himself a nobody. He was "commended" to the care of "Christian" miners and land-owners in great herds, in order that he might be trained in the Christian faith. His labor, once his own, was now by some hocus-pocus made to enrich the *conquistador*. Innumerable petty social and civil exactions pressed upon him. He could not ride horseback. He was not allowed to dress in the same fashion as the Spaniards, nor to carry arms. The estimate put upon him is well defined by the rule that in a court of law the word of one Spaniard was of equal weight with that of six Indians.

The naturally amiable and submissive temper of the Mexican people was by such treatment gradually degraded to a servile and helpless attitude very far removed from that independence of spirit and sprightliness of mind essential to freemen. Indeed, as a matter of fact, many of the natives were reduced to slavery, and only the fierce denunciations of a few warm-hearted priests, with the intervention, from time to time, of a philanthropic viceroy, kept the humane provisions of the Council of the Indies concerning human slavery from being abused even more than they were. The resistance offered by the poor Indians themselves was insignificant. The one

good thing which their new religion did for them was to give them a definite doctrine of, and an abiding faith in, God. This faith was accompanied, unfortunately, by a sort of cheerful fatalism altogether congenial to their temper and condition. Whatever ills came to them they were in the habit of accepting with a shrug and a smile,—*Es la voluntad de Dios!* “It is the will of God.” The phrase was applied many times to situations in which its theological accuracy is not so evident as its devoutness of spirit.

The student of Mexican national development as affected by national character will often be at a loss whether to attribute certain aspects of it to native and more or less ineradicable traits or to the influence of this long tutelage under Spain. The people display no great aptitude for self-government. For this they have been much criticized. A sympathetic consideration of the powerful influences from without that have molded them to a character as far as possible removed from the ideal of freemen will serve to change much of that criticism to a kinder estimate. When to the duress under which they received foreign influences is added the repressive and enervating character of those influences, the wonder is not that since being thrown upon their own resources they should have done so ill, but that they have done so well.

When all has been said that the fairest estimate of the facts will warrant, it remains true that the

Mexicans, previous to the advent of the Europeans, had taken only the first step toward the development of a national civilization. They were essentially a primitive and savage people. Excepting the arts of a rude sort of warfare, and some of the rudiments of civil government, largely still upon the tribal basis, they had everything to learn. It is only within recent times that the duty of nations to each other has begun to take even a slightly altruistic tinge. Canada and Australia have grown into self-governing nations as English colonies, and right-minded governors of India are striving,—against enormous odds, no doubt,—to bring that old and strange congeries of peoples up to the conception of some sort of autonomy. Cuba has been set up for herself by the United States; and any real evidence that it would be worth while would promptly bring a similar provision to one or all of the Philippine Islands. But three hundred years ago lands of the New World were not colonized for the good of those lands themselves, but for the glory and enrichment of the colonizers. Spain set no standard of possible local autonomy before her in dealing with Mexico. The conception was utterly foreign to the spirit of the time, and even more to the Spanish temper. The measures adopted were all primarily concerned with the mother country and with those who represented her in this New World. If they were humane and Christian enactments, that proceeded wholly from the Royal Council's conception of what was decent



and becoming to Christian Spain, not from any purpose to conciliate or to train the people lately brought into subjection to her arms.

The charge of having emasculated the national character of the Mexican people does not lie simply against the temper and mode of procedure of the Spanish government. In these that government but reflected the spirit of the time. The real onus of the indictment is upon those fundamental religious and social principles upon which the civilization of Spain itself had been reared, and which, during the centuries in which Mexico was losing so much, united with Mexican gold to disintegrate and wreck the Spanish civilization also. It was the subserviency of civil affairs to the dominating spirit of the ecclesiasticism of southern Europe which prepared the way for that most disastrous culmination of obscurantism known to history, the Spanish Inquisition.

The Inquisition was the apotheosis of autocratic tyranny. It not only attacked the right of the individual to civil liberty, to freedom of person in the material concerns of life, but carried the havoc of an unfeeling tyranny into the still more sacred realm of the spirit. It is bad enough to hold that a man cannot do as he would; it is a hundred-fold worse to deny him the privilege of thinking as he would. The ravages of the Inquisition among the submissive and meek-spirited Mexicans were, if possible, more terrifying than in Spain itself. That there were still, after three centuries, those who dared defy

it and think and plan for freedom, is one of those miracles of history for which the student will find he must be constantly prepared. To quench the love of liberty in the human heart is an undertaking so hopeless that one must fain trust that soon it will be forever given over. The record of government regardless of the wishes of the governed has been already long enough drawn out. It will be well if in the future the function and powers of government be otherwise employed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE REPUBLIC TRIUMPHANT.

WE have paused for these general considerations in order that there might be a more sympathetic understanding upon the part of the reader of the problem Mexico faced when in 1867, the French intervention having been brought to its end, she again undertook the task of self-government. The obstacles to a democracy by which she had been during fifty years repeatedly thwarted were now, in part, at least, eliminated. The principal of these were outside interference, a monarchical tendency at home, ambitious military leaders, and a meddling hierarchy, doubly powerful through its immense wealth. The first and second of these were now effectually disposed of. With the blood-stained body of Maximilian were buried the hopes of the monarchists at home. His tomb is also a stumbling-block to European princes which seems likely to continue to cool any ardor they might otherwise develop for attempting to set up an American kingdom. Opposition from the two remaining foes was checked but not ended. The clergy, stripped of their wealth and to a very large extent also of their prestige, remained nevertheless a potent influence in the life of the nation. As for ambitious and unscrupulous soldiers, men who prefer selfish aggrandize-

ment to the welfare of their country, it was, unfortunately, too much to expect that a type which had so long been conspicuous in Mexico's history would suddenly and finally disappear.

It was these restive military leaders who filled the land with turmoil during the four remaining years of the life of President Juarez. As soon as possible after gaining control in 1867 of the entire country, he issued a proclamation calling for a general election. Instead of limiting this to the ordinary choice under the constitution of a president, a chief justice, and the members of the national congress, he thought it an excellent time for the people to pass also upon certain constitutional changes which seemed to him desirable,—provision for a senate, the conceding of a veto power to the president, etc. Since the constitution itself provided the proper order for its own amendment, many affected to see in this proclamation a disposition upon the part of Juarez to override it. The people, though for the most part they refused to vote on these new proposals, elected a congress favorable to Juarez, by whom he was in due course declared to be the constitutionally elected president. Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada was made president of the supreme court, an office carrying with it the succession to the presidency in the event of the president's death.

During the intervening months Juarez had taken occasion to proclaim a general amnesty for all the partisans of the government of Maximilian, though

without conferring upon them the right to bear arms or hold office. Even this generous treatment, however, did not satisfy them. Instead of being thankful that they had not been executed or banished as traitors, they at once began an agitation against Juarez because he was so severe. Lerdo, who saw how easily he had been advanced to the position next in prestige to the presidency, gradually drew away from Juarez, whom he had hitherto supported with great loyalty, and began to form, especially among the opposition members in congress, a new party of "Lerdistas."

But it was, as has already been said, the military which gave most trouble. Foreseeing this, Juarez had, among the first of his official acts after obtaining control, reorganized and reduced the army. Its total strength was placed at twenty thousand men organized into four divisions, commanded respectively after the reorganization by Generals Regules, Porfirio Diaz, Escobedo, and Corona. The discretionary powers hitherto committed to generals as to recruiting and campaigning were now withdrawn, and all were put under the immediate orders of the president as commander in chief. This wholesale reduction of the army of course left many generals and colonels without a command. Besides, the men who, scattered through all sections of the country and largely independent of one another, had with most admirable harmony presented a united front to the foreign invader, were unable now to agree

among themselves, the pressure from without having been withdrawn.

Juarez was not himself a soldier. But he was a man of the most extraordinary personal valor. Time and again he saw not merely his government imperiled and all that he held dear in danger of annihilation, but his own life even hanging in the balance. It was impossible to break in upon his personal serenity. His calmness and decision in the most critical and urgent situations bound to him in an extraordinary way the military leaders upon whom he was forced to lean for support; and the common soldiers, and even the civilians, who were once and again called upon to protect him from personal violence never hesitated to do so, though it was often at the price of their own lives.

From 1868 to 1872 the uproar was continuous. Regiments, brigades, isolated squads, as the case might be, put forward the claims of some favorite leader who had "proclaimed" against the government, and had, one after the other, to be met and defeated. Whole states declared against certain acts of the federal congress or of the executive, and had to be coaxed or cudged into adhesion. In the congress itself, the conservatives, shifting to this new field the opposition which had so long tried in vain the arbitrament of arms, kept a clamorous minority hanging upon the skirts of the president and clogging as far as it could every advance step.

But Juarez was used to turmoil. To the noisy opposition in congress and to every new insurgent in arms he presented the same calm, imperturbable front. Alert, ready, puissant, he handled troops, directed campaigns, watched the clericals, kept peace in his cabinet, showing himself by every token the man of destiny.

The election of 1871 came on. A feeling was general that Juarez ought to give place to some other. To this he would not agree. Whether he was the victim of an old man's jealous ambition, or honestly thought it was unsafe for the country to risk a change at that time, will never be known. His friends took one view, his enemies another. Even his friends admit that this was the greatest mistake of his life. Both Lerdo and Diaz received a heavy vote for the presidency, but Juarez was elected. Lerdo, still at the head of the supreme court, took occasion of the general discontent to increase his party in congress, even holding out a friendly hand to the embittered conservatives. General Diaz, who some time before had resigned his place in the army and retired to private life, vexed at this continuance in power of a chief who seemed indisposed to give way to other ambitious and able men, issued his *Plan de la Noria*. In this he proposed to set aside the government and the constitution and call a general assembly to reorganize the whole basis of civil government. The document does him no great credit, nor did the rather guer-

rilla-like campaign in which he with a few followers supported it.

The fiercest of all the outbursts, however, and one that for a moment threatened the most serious consequences, took place in Mexico City. October 1, 1871, just a month after the election of the president for another term, but before his inauguration, like a bolt from the clear sky broke forth the insurrection of the garrison at the capital. The regiment having charge of the police headquarters murdered their colonel and released all the prisoners. In the principal barracks near by, the whole force was involved. Had a really able leader been found, the result might have been disastrous. But before night Juarez had the revolutionists besieged in the barracks where the disturbance began, which that night were stormed by his faithful and valiant general, Rocha, and the movement was crushed. A number of the leaders, and not a few of the soldiers, were summarily condemned by court-martial and shot. This action produced an exciting episode in congress when Zamacona, the most active of the supporters of Diaz—who were beginning to call themselves "Porfiristas"—bitterly criticised the government, for which the able patriot-poet, Guillermo Prieto, had the unenviable task of being spokesman.

With his usual vigor and success Juarez set himself the winter and spring succeeding to bring order out of what had threatened to become chaos, and by the summer of 1872 was again firmly intrenched



in his position as constitutional president. His courage and coolness, as well as his respect for law and order, may be seen in the fact that he made no effort to displace Lerdo, though aware that he was constantly intriguing with the enemies of the government. July 18, 1872, Juarez died, somewhat suddenly and from a disease of the heart. To such characterization of him as may be gathered from the preceding pages it will perhaps be well to add here the brief estimate left by his friend and associate, José María Iglesias, himself an able and incorruptible patriot: "Although Don Benito Juarez was a man of exceptional capacity and not wanting in intellectual training, it may be said that neither his native intelligence nor his learning was of the first rank. His real merit—which may justly be declared exceptional—is to be traced to his extraordinary traits of character. His firmness in matters of principle was immovable. To his principles he held at any cost of effort or sacrifice. Adversity could not vanquish, prosperity could not spoil him. So extraordinary was his passive personal courage that to many it seemed mere insensibility. So honest did he prove himself to be that every opportunity of personal enrichment offered by his long career was carelessly put aside. If it is to be admitted that he clung a little too persistently to his place of power, it is also to be added that he was ever governed by patriotic motives."

Lerdo, by virtue of his position as president of

the supreme court and in conformity to the constitution, assumed the presidential office. As soon as congress assembled in the autumn he was confirmed therein, virtually without opposition. During his term *ad interim* he had published a proclamation of amnesty for the imperialists, removing most of the disabilities under which Juarez had resolutely kept them, but not yet granting all that they demanded. The partisans of Diaz were quiescent for the time being, since they had been acting with the Lerdistas against the party of Juarez, and were not ready at a moment's notice to break the friendly bonds thus formed.

Lerdo, a sprightly, eloquent, handsome, and able man, had a comparatively quiet term. Only one serious military episode disturbed the country's peace. Don Manuel Lozada, an ignorant but able Indian of the territory of Tepic, who had favored the intervention and been lauded by Maximilian and the French emperor, kept still in his mountain fastness, a sort of Cave of Adullam, where his renegade force was constantly recruited. General Ramon Corona, in command at Guadalajara, had long since begged to be allowed to crush this nest of traitors, but the government refused. Early in 1873 they swept down upon him at a time when his forces had been greatly depleted, and only by the most heroic fighting at a disadvantage in numbers of four to one, did he defeat and scatter these dreaded banditti. He was thereafter rightly looked upon as the

savior of Guadalajara, the devastation of which city would inevitably have followed his defeat.

In civil matters the most significant event of the term of Lerdo was the act of September 25, 1874, finally approved and promulgated in December of that year, elevating to the rank of organic constitutional law the *Leyes de Reforma*, especially those proclaiming the separation between Church and State, the liberty of worship, that matrimony is a civil contract, that churches cannot hold real estate, that the religious oath in courts shall be substituted by a protest or promise to speak the truth, and that convents and monasteries are illegal. This set the final seal upon the confiscation of the ecclesiastical property, a step which even Maximilian, with all his devotion to the Church, had approved by not abrogating the contracts for the sale of this property made under the original law of Juarez.

One term was not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of Lerdo, and though, when the case of Juarez was under consideration, he had opposed the practice of allowing a president to be reëlected at the end of his period in office, he now, as his own quadrennium drew to a close, began to seek to secure the place for himself during another. He was ambitious, not over-scrupulous, and especially averse to taking advice. His election was forced through by the open use of federal power, and duly proclaimed by congress, October 26, 1876. The storm then burst, and with tremendous violence.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### PORFIRIO DIAZ AND THE ARTS OF PEACE.

THE events which in 1876 made General Diaz instead of Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, who had served part of the previous term and been reëlected, chief magistrate of Mexico were both dramatic and painful. After the election that autumn the situation changed with lightning-like rapidity. Judge José Maria Iglesias, an honest and high-minded man, had been reëlected chief justice of the supreme court. Without having before taken sides openly between the Lerdistas and the Porfiristas, though supposedly favorable to the president, under whom he had just served three years, Iglesias was so outraged by the manner in which Lerdo had forced his own reëlection that he declared it fraudulent. Retiring to Salamanca, in the wealthy state of Guanajuato, whose governor favored him, he proclaimed himself to be, under the constitution, the legitimate president and proceeded to organize his cabinet.

More ominous still was the revolutionary movement which had broken out early in the year under General Hernandez, so soon in fact as Lerdo had announced his intention of again becoming a candidate for the presidency. This *pronunciamiento* against him is known as the Plan of Tuxtepec. General Diaz later took it up and with certain mod-

ifications made it his own. He was at the time the ablest and most popular military leader in the country. The collisions between his forces and those of the Lerdist party were frequent and bloody. He was rapidly gaining on the president, who was not himself a soldier, when the defection of Iglesias cut the ground completely from under Lerdo. Vexed at Iglesias, and despairing of holding his own against Diaz, he quietly slipped out of Mexico by night, leaving the capital in possession of the Porfiristas who had just gained a decisive victory over the government troops. The exiled president took refuge in New York, where he remained till his death, some fourteen years later.

Diaz promptly moved against Iglesias, but the latter, though stubborn in his opinion that he was the legally constituted president, had not sufficient troops to undertake a campaign. He therefore,—after a personal interview with General Diaz, as some insist,—quietly withdrew to the Pacific coast and took ship for San Francisco.

The field was now clear. General Diaz ordered an election for president, as both president and chief justice were gone, and was himself elected without opposition, taking charge of the government May 5, 1877, for the presidential term to end November 30, 1880. Succeeded when that time came by General Manuel Gonzales,—the first time, by the way, that the presidency had ever passed peacefully from one man to another,—he was again elected in 1884,

as he has been at each election since that date. This brief statement completes the story of Mexico's political changes.

But why is it, the reader will be asking, that President Diaz has been able to keep the peace when all others before him had failed? The answer to that is necessarily manifold, yet the mystery is less than it seems. The explanation is to be found first in the man himself, and secondly in the measures which, being what he is, he has adopted. One or two fortuitous conditions from without must also be taken into the account. Of these the most essential has already been discussed at some length. When the Church and its orders were deprived of their wealth, then the most fruitful source of armed rebellions was dried up. Without the work of Juarez that of Diaz would have been impossible. The principles of the constitution, after the way for them was cleared by the *Leyes de Reforma*, have proved a solid foundation for a peaceful administration which has continued now for nearly thirty years.

To this favoring circumstance are to be added a few others. One of these is that the people were exceedingly weary of war. It had devastated the country, demoralized society, annihilated commerce, choked agriculture, made uncertain the tenure of life and property, and sent to a bloody grave the flower of the nation's youth. The common people, caring little for the elective franchise, and knowing nothing of governmental questions, were at last

willing that anybody who wished should be president so long as they were left in peace.

Again—and this means more than would appear—the military competitors of Diaz were nearly all older than he. They rapidly died off. The probability of a successful revolution against a general of his experience and tried skill thus soon became infinitesimal. Not many were foolish enough to try the experiment.

Finally—though for this the president himself was largely responsible—the advent of the railways during the early eighties made it possible for the government to handle its troops with a speed and efficiency which, a thing never before possible, nipped revolutions in the bud.

Turning from external and largely adventitious conditions to the man, we shall find in President Diaz himself the best explanation at once of his success and of the measures by which he has insured it. First of all, he is a popular hero. A native (born September 15, 1830) of the patriotic state of Oaxaca, which has given to the republic both Juarez and Diaz, the persecution of the jealous and ever-suspicious Santa Anna turned him from his chosen pursuit of the law into a soldier's life while he was yet a young man (1853). From then till the end of the French intervention, his career was one of adventure. Active, athletic, a horseman, a swimmer, a rifle shot, he is still at seventy-four a vigorous and handsome man. His numerous thrilling adventures

and his fearless handling of his troops have made his personal valor a matter of common knowledge, while his generosity to opponents and his loyalty to friends, his devotion to good government, and, last of all, his unbroken success, have made the Mexican people look up to him with confidence and admiration.

He has accomplished that transition which has been the despair of many of the world's great captains. After success as a soldier he has proved himself also a great civil ruler. The men who have done this can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. Those who have failed are far more numerous. It must be allowed that he has been spared one crucial test. The scripture which warns the soldier to do violence to no man, and to be content with his wages, touches the vices which are surest to result from the military life—harshness and avarice. The administration of President Diaz has been autocratic and stern. It is not worth while to deny this. Measures have been carried out by him which, as well as the manner of their administration, would have been deeply resented in some countries. His reply to objections concerning them is that he knows his own people. Happily this is true. They have been too long accustomed to autocratic rule to resent it now. The president has, therefore, not had to change radically the principles upon which he exacted discipline while a soldier. He is still, essentially, a military ruler.



In the matter of avarice he is, fortunately, constituted much as was Juarez. No doubt he has laid aside some wealth during these thirty years; but he has never cared enough for money to cause serious offense. He is not ostentatious; he is not greedy. The country was on the verge of anarchy when the administration of President Gonzales came to a close in 1884, and friends and enemies alike were clamoring for "Don Porfirio." The principal reason was that the bluff old soldier, who had just taken his turn in the chief magistracy, had developed an enthusiasm in money getting that scandalized the whole country while bringing into sharp relief the self-restraint of Diaz.

The president of Mexico is also a broad-minded man. Men who had opposed him in the days of his disputes with Juarez and with Lerdo,—“Juaristas” and “Lerdistas,”—were nevertheless given places under his government, some even in the army, commensurate with their ability. Their tenure was, of course, dependent on their loyalty to their new chief. Others, army officers especially, were retired on full pay. A few ventured on “pernicious activity” against the government, and were promptly exiled or dealt with even more severely. But many of his former enemies became his staunch friends and supporters. A conspicuous case was that of Sr. Romero Rubio, who was in 1876 a most active Lerdista. Ten years later he was a prominent member of the

cabinet of President Diaz, who had meantime married his daughter!

No little of breadth has been displayed in his dealing with the question of foreigners in Mexico. Popular prejudice against them had long been intense. The country was extremely provincial. The Catholic Church created sentiment against the incoming of influences which might disturb its unquestioned sway. The war with the United States and the consequent loss of territory made suspicion of Americans easy and natural. Every addition to their number in Mexico was declared to be in furtherance of the intention of the United States to take possession of the whole country. Wealthy monopolists also, dreading the incoming of competition, made common cause with retrograde priests and narrow politicians in decrying the foreigner.

Against all these influences Diaz resolutely set himself. He took the ground that a sparsely settled, poor, and backward country needed foreign settlers and capital to develop it, and would be the better if it would learn from these foreigners some of their modern and progressive ways. The matter of railroads became a crucial question. The president saw distinctly two things. One was that railways were necessary both to the stability of his government and the development of the country; and the other, that Mexicans would not build them. Only a few of his people had sufficient money, and they would not invest it in that way. So he frankly

encouraged foreign corporations. The roads were subsidized. Congress granted favorable conditions as to tariffs during, and for a time after, construction. The president used this as an entering wedge to encourage other foreign investments, and by giving all foreigners generous treatment and full legal protection, he won their warm good will. The value of this to his administration has not been slight. Probably five hundred millions of foreign money are now invested in that republic. With the friendly backing of men controlling all that, the financial standing of the government is easily assured.

We pass thus from considerations of the personal traits of Mexico's president to an examination of the measures by which he has made the last three decades the most peaceful which that country has seen for a century. No one of them has been of such consummate wisdom as to justify the claim for him of genius. Yet they have been, without exception, marked by a certain practical sagacity and sense of proportion which for everyday affairs are quite as valuable as genius. For the country at large and for his government in relation to it, the chief problems which President Diaz found were those of policing, finance, and development. How he met them is, in detail, a long story. Yet the outline is simple, as we shall see.

First of all was the protection of the government and of the people from their enemies. Brigands had taken possession of the highways and mountain

passes, and crimes against person and property had long gone unpunished. As for enemies of the government, there were left, here and there, a number of influential generals who could see no impropriety in their following the custom that had so long obtained in Mexico of seeking by force to take possession of the supreme power. The Church party also, who recognized in Diaz a determined and uncompromising liberal, one who had had much to do with the defeat of their pet scheme of the French intervention, though beaten and deprived of much of their resources, were by no means ready to give up the fight.

To meet this situation Diaz kept the men of real influence and ability, whom he suspected of revolutionary designs, constantly under his surveillance. They were well provided for and left in apparent liberty, but they understood what risks a false move involved. Even the patriotic Escobedo, the hero of Querétaro, was for good reason exiled from the country before the end of Diaz's first term. During the second (in 1886) General García de la Cadena began laying plans for an uprising in the state of Zacatecas. In the midst of them he was apprehended by the local authorities and promptly executed, whether by direction of the president or not is not known. Some of the leading patriot generals were made governors of the different states, virtually subject to appointment by the president, and others were left in command of various bodies of troops.

The standing army itself was scattered throughout the country. Even now its separate brigades and regiments are not often left long at any one place, especial care being taken to prevent too much of intimacy between the army and the citizens. From all of which it will be seen that, availing himself of the widely extended telegraph system and the railways which now reach almost every section of the country, the president has been able to keep his hand on the military situation in a manner which has virtually made insurrections impossible.

To eliminate brigandage he organized a sort of federal mounted police. Congress enacted certain specific laws regulating their duties and function, but it was from the beginning understood that they were to be virtually under the personal direction of the president. They are well mounted, well paid, and, dressed in the picturesque *charro* riding habit, form a body of troops which captivates the imagination of adventurous young men. Their efficiency has from the first been remarkable. When these *rurales* go after a bandit they usually get him. This efficiency was notably increased by a shrewd move on the president's part. Getting into communication with some of the leading brigands, he made them the unique proposition that they should cease to be robbers and join his police force. A number of them accepted. The fate of the rest was then sealed. The formality of trial and execution for brigandage in out-of-the-way mountain regions is often dis-

pensed with by means of what is called the *Ley de Fuga*,—that is, if a prisoner runs he must be shot. Many a wretched murderer has been left weltering by the roadside, the sergeant in charge merely reporting that he attempted to escape.

Train wrecking was indulged in by the lawless for a time. Thereupon congress, at the president's instance, passed a law depriving of the right of trial by jury, and of other constitutional guarantees, any man who should be proved to have had anything to do with derailing or robbing a train. The effect was instantaneous. Train robbing ceased. Now Mexico is one of the best policed countries in the civilized world. The traveler may penetrate its most remote mountain fastnesses with the assurance that in some near-by village is a squad of gray-coated *rurales*, keeping a sharp watch on the wild trails and wild people about him.

The financial measures of the Diaz administration, and the steps taken by it for the development of the country and people, will occupy us in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THIRTY YEARS OF PROGRESS.

IN 1876 the poverty and backwardness of the Mexican people were such as showed but too clearly the disastrous effects of fifty years of almost continuous civil war. Theirs is a country of vast natural wealth and of almost unlimited resources. But agriculture had languished, and commerce had been cramped by foolish tariff restrictions between state and state, by lack of transportation facilities, and by interminable political disturbances. The government was without prestige at home or credit abroad. Treaties made by Juarez at the close of the intervention had temporarily quieted the restlessness of foreign investors, since rather than leave to other governments any possible pretext for dissatisfaction he had actually assumed some of the compromises and obligations of Maximilian. Experiments in various kinds of taxation had been undertaken at different times in the country's history, but the chief dependence of the federal government was always, as it is yet, upon import duties. The country, not being given to manufacturing, imports extensively the finished products which its people require, and the income from tariffs is steady. Under President Diaz a stamp tax and various forms of internal revenue have been experimented with. The old bonded

debt held in England was, in 1886, after one or two previous efforts had failed, refunded, and the rate of interest reduced. The movement of commerce has been greatly stimulated by the advent of railways, and agriculture and mining have flourished by reason of continued peace.

The president has been especially scrupulous to maintain, by prompt payment of the interest on all its obligations, the credit of his government. As the money of the country is on a silver basis, while the interest on its bonds is payable in gold, when in the early nineties the price of silver sank so rapidly, and when along with that came a drought that in 1893 approached the dimensions of a famine, the government found itself in sore straits. An appeal was made to the federal employees, who thereupon agreed to contribute a percentage of their salaries till the national treasury should be able to adjust itself to these unfriendly conditions. This is rightly looked upon as a notable instance of the patriotism of the Mexican people and of their confidence in President Diaz. This period of financial depression, with the continued reduction in the exchange value of silver, had one unexpected but happy result. The people began to manufacture many things which they had hitherto imported. The raw materials and the labor could be had at their old prices in a silver currency while the higher exchange operated with the high tariffs to hinder the importation of finished products. The general scarcity of



fuel throughout the country will, however, be always a bar to the extensive development of manufacturing interests in Mexico.

The government, under the able direction of Mr. José Ives Limantour, Secretary of the Treasury, has in recent years overcome its many financial handicaps, and is now in a comfortable way. Its credit abroad is stable, its current expenses—among which has not yet been included a navy—are promptly met, and its resources are constantly increasing. The fluctuations in the price of silver still, of course, cause much inconvenience. After many efforts, the several states have at last been cleared of their local customhouses, their local coinage, and of various other relics of their former provincial status, all of which had long hindered the industrial advancement of the people. Thirty years of peace for the development of agriculture, during which time money has poured into the country for investment in mining, railways, and manufacturing, have added immensely to the people's wealth, while giving opportunity for the development of popular education, a free press, municipal improvements, and the varied arts of modern civilization.

From the beginning the liberals have advocated popular education. The ignorance of the people they rightly held responsible for their slow progress in civilization, and especially for their inert subserviency to a self-seeking hierarchy. It was this power of the conservative leaders over the masses

that time and again defeated the plans of men who sought the liberation and enlightenment of the whole people. As soon as possible after getting control of things, Juarez planned an elaborate public school system, modeled in a large measure upon that of the United States, of which he had made a study. This was set in operation in the federal district and in as many of the states as could be persuaded to follow the example. It has during the administration of General Diaz been carefully elaborated and developed, becoming more and more efficient as time demonstrates to a naturally conservative people its value to their country.

It has had from the beginning to contend with the implacable hostility of the Church. No longer able to wield its old influence in the military and political affairs of the country, the Catholic Church still reigned well-nigh supreme in the social realm. All persons who had any pretensions to wealth and social standing were under strict orders from it. To show friendship to any of the progressive measures of the liberals was to invite anathemas and social ostracism. The public schools especially came under the ban as atheistical and plebeian. Both teachers and pupils placed themselves by the very fact of their connection with the public school among the excommunicated and religiously outcast.

This produced two effects. First, it greatly cramped the development of the public school systems. Outside the cities and larger towns, in those

smaller communities where the word of the priest is paramount, these schools have made their way very slowly indeed. Only by the resolution of some public-spirited citizen will they be found to exist at all in such communities, and then probably at a poor dying rate.

The other result of this hostility will seem insignificant to some, though really it is a most serious matter. In the absence until within very recent years of any other presentation of Christian truth than that of the Roman Catholic Church, and by virtue of the exaggerated claims of that Church, it was taken for granted in the minds of most Mexicans that any one who broke with the Catholic Church was, *ipso facto*, an atheist. The poor but ambitious young man or woman who saw in the public schools the only means of securing an education was convinced beforehand that to be educated meant to be a skeptic. Even the professors, many of whom ought to have known better, admitted the implication, and, however ill in some instances it may have suited their inclinations, allowed themselves to be classed with the unbelieving.

The public schools became by all this the hope of the lowest social stratum. People of that class had not much to lose, and felt that there might be something in the schools to gain. Means of rising from their poverty and ignorance had never before been offered them. The Indian had come into his own at last. How they have profited is a most engaging

story. The girls especially have forged upward through the various grades of primary, secondary, and high school work, completing often with notable merit the state normal course, and going out from homes of poverty and squalor to be the teachers of the next generation. The physical and intellectual vitality of the lower classes is superior to that of the wealthy families, many of whom are showing the deterioration of three hundred years of pampering. One result of these new opportunities for the poor must be a leveling of the social distinctions that have long cursed Mexico, and thus a distinct impulse to the development of a real and vital democracy.

These recent years have seen the amelioration of the poor in other respects than in educational privileges. Some old laws concerning the relation between farm laborers and the owner of the land, which reflected the feudalistic spirit of the vice-regal administration, and by which the laborer was virtually the slave of the land-holder, have at last been abolished. The substitution of various kinds of script, redeemable only by those issuing it, for money in the payment of wages, and the circulation in several states of a depreciated local currency, gave the federal government much concern till both were at last abolished. The states have little by little come to accept the well-established principle of taxing the land, though it had never before been done, since the owners of the land were precisely the men

who made the laws. The abolition of *alcabalas*, or duties charged upon goods entering a state, or even a city, lifted from the back of the poor agriculturalist one of the heaviest and most unreasonable burdens he had been called upon to bear. Most of the reforms just mentioned have been forced, a little at a time, upon reluctant states by the persistency of the federal government.

The beneficent results of some of the *Leyes de Reforma*, upon whose enforcement President Diaz has resolutely insisted, are beginning at last to make themselves distinctly felt. Among these none have been more important to public morals than the laws concerning civil marriage and the secularization of the cemeteries. One of the standing abuses of the old ecclesiastical system was in the enormous fees charged by the priests for marriage. Although philanthropic popes and bishops issued from time to time proclamations regulating this fee, they came to nothing. The practice of the priests was to charge every cent they thought the bridegroom could pay, and to refuse to proceed with the ceremony till the money was in hand. As a result, the poor often omitted marriage entirely. This brought widespread disaster to the morals of the people. The law of Juarez made marriage purely a civil matter. It is carefully safeguarded by all due precautions, but is free, a small fee being allowed for the expense of recording, etc. If the contracting parties wish a religious ceremony also, they are free to have

it, but it has no legal status. The people were slow to incur the anathemas of the priests by availing themselves of this law, but they have now begun almost universally to do so.

The cemeteries were also a means of extortion. By insisting that all dead should be buried in consecrated ground and by consecrating only a small area, the clergy made that area abnormally valuable and were able to collect immense revenues out of the lease and sale of plats. Under the present law the cemeteries must be controlled by the municipalities or by some other government entity, and their regulations, charges, and management generally are subject to civil enactment and made matters of public knowledge.

Such are some of the lines upon which is proceeding the social and political development of the Mexican people as guided by the dominating personality of President Diaz. It should be remembered that, to a degree which can scarcely be comprehended by one not actually conversant with affairs there, what the federal government does means what General Porfirio Diaz wishes done. It is to his everlasting credit that the measures which he has instigated have been so nearly always for the good of the people, and not merely to gratify his own whims or to advance his personal interests. He has accomplished much. Much remains to be done. Let us in the next chapter briefly review some of the problems and difficulties which still await him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SITUATION TO-DAY.

IN Mexico as elsewhere the political well-being of the people is inseparably bound up with their moral condition. The effect upon public and private morals of many of those influences with which our studies have been concerned was necessarily profound. So far, however, this has been lightly passed over. An intimate acquaintance with its people and some knowledge of those causes which, involuntarily to themselves, have operated to put them at a disadvantage morally, will cause the student to hesitate before bringing a general indictment against any nation. The careless traveler, writing after superficial observation, will lay on his colors thick. He is sure that the moral shortcomings which are strange to him, and therefore peculiarly abhorrent, are worse than those of his own people. But a more careful balancing of causes and effects and a more profound study of the essential unity of human nature will often serve to show that the differences seemingly so wide are really in degree rather than in kind, in manifestation and not in essence. Human nature as found in Mexico, native and imported, was from the first the ordinary article. Such moral warp, therefore, as it seems now to show

must be charged, in so much as it is at all peculiar, to peculiar influences brought to bear upon it.

Some of the most important of these have been pointed out. First of all is to be reckoned the privation of enlightenment. It was bad enough that the Indian was not educated for the duties of citizenship and in order that he might rise in the social scale. But a far deeper and deadlier injury was done him by denying him moral instruction. Religious liberty on the basis of an open Bible and freedom of worship is the greatest boon that can be bestowed on a nation. It bears directly and essentially on the development of individual character. There can be no better training in the self-reliance and initiative needed for the ordinary affairs of life than is had by dealing at first hand and from childhood with the momentous issues of religion.

The Bible is, in other words, the pioneer of liberty. It was precisely because of this that those who did not desire that Mexico should be free kept the Bible from her people. In so doing they accomplished their object of perpetuating a submissive spirit among them, but at the cost of that moral degeneration which the lack of such instruction as is imparted by the Christian Scriptures is sure to produce. The Mexicans were taught to consider themselves Christians, yet were denied the Christian literature which alone could give them to understand the meaning of the term. The result was a profound and widespread confusion as to the na-



ture of Christianity, and, as with the passing years the evil worked itself out, a disastrous divorce between religion and morality. This separation is one of the things which should never be. Religion is not religion if it is unmoral, while ethics without religion is on a basis so unstable that it furnishes no guarantee for a solid national life.

It is but stating a manifest truth to add that this confusion as to the moral significance of the Christian religion was not confined to the people, but infected also even their religious teachers. The standard, intellectual and moral, of the Mexican priesthood, became, as time passed, lower and lower. When, in the earlier years of the present evangelical movement, discussions would arise from time to time between the priests and the advocates of Protestantism, it was found that only rarely did a priest possess any sort of a Bible, and still more rarely did one show the most rudimentary acquaintance with the Bible's contents. The Roman Catholic Church has much to answer for; but seeing what the Bible has been worth to the modern world, it would seem that no graver responsibility can be charged against her than the withholding of these benefits from those peoples over whom she has exercised control.

It is almost superfluous to point out further that the moral tendency of some of the abuses which the reform laws attempted to correct was not less grave than their political objectionableness. Indeed, the

two are most intimately connected. The corruption of the people by reason of the difficulties placed in the way of marriage, for example, was appalling. It was all the worse because it received a *quasi* sanction on the part of the Church. No serious difficulty was made concerning the absolution and final pardon of a man or woman who had lived in open disregard of sexual morality. The priests, indeed, could not afford to be exacting at this point, for among them the baneful effects of Rome's dogma of priestly celibacy were everywhere in evidence. As to this we have the testimony of one who, a priest himself, can scarcely be suspected of overstating the facts through hostility or prejudice.

With the French expeditionary forces at the time of Maximilian's intervention went the Abbé Domenech, as chaplain general, becoming later Maximilian's "director of the press." Upon his return to Paris in 1867 he printed a small volume which he called *Le Mexique tel qu'il est*—"Mexico as It Is." With engaging frankness and in that sprightly and direct style which seems natural to a Frenchman, he criticises Mexico—politically, socially, religiously. This semi-humorous paragraph about the priests will suffice both as a sample of his manner and as a corroboration of the statements made above: "The clergy carry their love of family to that of paternity. In my travels in the interior of Mexico many pastors have refused me hospitality in order to prevent my seeing their 'nieces' and 'cousins,' and their chil-

dren. It is difficult to determine the character of these connections. Priests who are known and recognized as fathers of families are by no means rare. The people consider it natural enough, and do not rail at the conduct of their pastors except when they are not content with one wife. In many places the priests indeed marry, and their wives are known as such."

The abbé then tells with evident amusement of how one of these women defied a merchant who threatened to have her arrested because she would not pay for a dress she had bought. "I would have you understand, sir," she said, "that I belong to the Sacred Mitre!" That is, she was entitled to the *fuero* of being tried only by a Church court!

Of the ignorance as to the real meaning of Christianity and its bearing upon practical morals which prevailed throughout Mexico, both this abbé and Madame Calderón de la Barca, another devout Catholic, who printed a book about that country, give ample testimony. Madame de la Barca was the wife of the first Spanish minister sent to Mexico after the independence of that country was recognized by Spain. Passing through the United States on her way to Mexico in 1839, she left her daughters at school in Boston. Her weekly letters to them were so intelligent and so frank and so sprightly that W. H. Prescott, the historian, who heard them read from time to time, begged that they might be printed. Under the title of "Life in Mexico" the book

was issued in 1843. It is a most vivid picture of social, religious, and political conditions. The lady's position gave her access to everything that was of interest to her, and her pen-pictures disclose conditions that can only be taken as a stern indictment of the Church which had already, when she wrote, had three hundred years in which to impress its teachings upon a docile and not stupid race.

It is unfortunately true, also, that the divorce between morality and religion was made as complete in the matter of truth-telling and common honesty as in regard to social purity. The extreme poverty and the servile status of the lower classes brought with them naturally the servile vices of lying and stealing, against which, unhappily, the Church, with its Jesuitical distinction between venial and mortal sins and its mechanical definition of piety, set up no adequate barrier. Instead of providing remedies for the evil tendencies of a defective social and political organization, it indeed but emphasized those evils by identifying itself with the oppressions and the invidious distinctions by which the ignorant and poor were held in their unhappy estate. It cannot be surprising, therefore, that when the patriot leaders set out to break the shackles of the people, their attacks seemed, in more than one particular, to be launched directly against the Church. And for the same reason it must be evident that the burden of national ignorance and moral degradation, which to

this day menaces the onward march of free institutions, makes the question of Mexico's future first of all a religious question.

The reader will now scarcely need be told that, in my opinion, the one means for assuring the stability of the Mexican republic, as well as the permanent well-being of the people who are its citizens, is the vital improvement of the religious situation. Without attempting to settle the question as to whether the Roman Catholic presentation of religious truth is ever adequate to insure a stable national life, it needs only to be pointed out that in this instance its failure, after four centuries of opportunity, is so absolute that something more must be done. From the testimony of devout Catholics it is evident that Mexico is far below the religious ideal of even that Church. In other words, the Catholicism of the country needs itself to be purged and elevated. Unprejudiced observers will be sure to add also that it is time that Church should no longer have a monopoly. Its unchallenged supremacy during these centuries has, more than any other one thing, tended to its own corruption. For its own sake, therefore, it needs a competitor. President Juarez, with that clearness of vision which made him the greatest of Mexicans, openly expressed this opinion, and showed that he was serious in it by giving to the first representatives of the Protestant faith who arrived soon after the fall of Maximilian a most hearty welcome. He even went so far as to contribute for their work

a confiscated Catholic church, the chapel of San José de la Gracia in Mexico City.

It is not my purpose to enter here upon a detailed portraiture of the darker aspects of Mexico's mental and moral condition. Besides being outside the purpose of this volume, this undertaking is the less attractive to me because of my firm conviction that in the worst of these phases of national character the Mexican people have been more sinned against than sinning. A further consideration is that conditions there, under the influence of Protestant missions, free schools, a free press, a growing postal system, railways, telegraph and telephone lines, and the pressure of enlightened public sentiment, are rapidly improving. A picture true to-day would be too dark for to-morrow. Let us look to the bright future rather than to the gloomy past.

But my effort to set forth the meaning of Mexico's history will have been in vain if it is not clear by this time that the future of liberty and progress there, the permanence of republican institutions, at any rate, is menaced chiefly by ignorant indifference to the privileges of citizenship, on the one hand, and, on the other, by widespread moral incompetence for their exercise. The improvement intellectually and morally of the mass of the country's citizenship is the great task of her statesmen. The exigencies of the problem of administration have, up to the present, been such that the government, though republican in name, has been forced to preserve in a large

measure the character of a dictatorship. One of the chief evils of such a condition of things is the difficulty of the transition from the autocratic to the democratic manner of government. Paternalism does not prepare the average citizen for the duties of citizenship. It is but human nature that he should rather lapse into indifference, and say, "If the president will do everything, he may." It is manifestly unfair to President Diaz to blame him for being somewhat autocratic. He governs in this way not merely because he will, but because he must.

There is not an ill of the body politic nor of the individual citizen for which the gospel is not the best of remedies. All that has been said of the value of the open Bible as a civilizing agency is doubly true when to the Bible is added the influence of the living Church. Mexico needs Protestantism as a check and a correction for Romanism, it is true; infinitely more, however, does she need the pure gospel of Jesus Christ for its own sake. The impulse which the Protestant faith gives to intellectual development is but a part of its value. Even more essential to national well-being is the elevation of individual character and the inculcation of self-restraint and love for others which Christianity brings. Democracies are established on a permanent foundation not simply by enlightenment (*ilustración*) sufficient to cognize what are the rights of man, nor yet by the spirit of revolution which dares assert those rights in the teeth of tyranny. Freedom is

not license. The individual's rights must be seen as limited by the rights of others. Clearness of vision to see this and power of self-control to accept it are a fruit of the gospel. It is in the altruism which Christianity inculcates, in the practice, more or less perfect, of the golden rule of Christ, that the essential institutions of democracy will find their true stability and permanence.

How deep and melancholy is Mexico's need of the consolations of the gospel as a balm for the individual sorrows and the unhealed moral sicknesses of her people, is a theme upon which I will not enter here. But that the influence upon her citizens of Protestant schools, of Protestant freedom of thought, Protestant probity and initiative, is to be an essential factor in solving the national problems of this near neighbor of ours is a proposition which must commend itself to every thoughtful observer.



## CHAPTER XX.

### MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.

ONLY this single chapter is devoted to a history of Protestantism in Mexico, for the double reason that full accounts are accessible in the records of the various societies engaged there and because the work is going forward so rapidly that any record of it has only a transitory value. The constitution of 1857 first proclaimed religious liberty, but since it was a matter of ten years before that instrument could be enforced, no mission work of consequence was undertaken till the early seventies. Before the sixth decade of the nineteenth century was over, a little work had been done along the northern border of the country, chiefly by way of distributing Bibles. A few schools had been begun also, mostly as private enterprises, but which later became missionary agencies. Late in that decade a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Rev. H. C. Riley, reached Mexico City and began at once to provide for the establishment of Protestantism. He was well introduced and had the confidence and indirect support of President Juarez. So impressed was the president with the value of this new movement that he turned over to Mr. Riley one of the confiscated chapels, as has been already noted, and opened the

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way for his purchase of another and much larger one.

About the same time several spontaneous religious movements arose among the Mexicans themselves, one of them in particular having crystallized about a French Bible brought over by one of Napoleon's soldiers. It fell into the hands of a patriot Mexican soldier, at the time a prisoner of the French, named Sostenes Juarez. So taken was he with its contents that he said to himself, "This is a better weapon with which to fight the *clero* than is the sword." As soon as possible therefore after obtaining his release he organized a little society and began to be a teacher of the Bible. This was in 1865. Later he became a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The old French Bible with the manuscript articles of organization of that primitive society are now in the archives of that Church's Mission Board at Nashville, Tenn.

Mr. Riley's work received support for a time from a sort of interdenominational organization, but later was taken over by the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, and since that time has suffered a good many vicissitudes. For a time it was decidedly the most vigorous and promising of the evangelical movements, and did an especially valuable service in training for the ministry a number of bright young Mexicans. Mr. Riley was made a bishop of his Church, but was later deposed, after which he connected him-

self for a time with an independent movement. The mission of the Episcopal Church is now in a fairly flourishing condition.

In 1873 the two branches of Episcopal Methodism began work, and in rapid order were followed by the Presbyterians (North and South and Associated Reformed), the Baptists, North and South, the Congregationalists (American Board), the Friends, the Christian Church or Disciples, and the Seventh Day Adventists. There are, besides, one or two individual and independent enterprises, of English origin, and quite recently a so-called "Mexican National Evangelical Church" has arisen.

All these mission movements have proceeded along similar lines and in substantial agreement with each other. In the early days when access to the people was difficult and rather violent persecution common, recourse was had to the agency of day schools for children. The public school system was at the time chaotic, and the offer of instruction in English was found to be a special inducement. Later the primary day school has been less used, the public schools having developed a good deal and the way having opened for the expenditure of most of the mission funds on more directly evangelistic work. It is no longer difficult to get at the people. They are quite willing to come to the preaching places provided these are kept open at no expense to them and they can hear a pleasant and interesting speaker.

To rent or build the necessary chapels and to train and support the ministers to speak in them absorbs most of the money now employed in the active propaganda of Protestantism. School work is kept up mostly in boarding schools, where the young preachers are prepared for their work, and the young women are trained under a protection and with moral influences which they could not elsewhere obtain.

So much of gratuitous work has had some bad effects on the native churches which have meantime been organized. Having been brought to a knowledge of the gospel by provisions for worship which cost them nothing, and being able to secure the education of their choicest boys and girls in schools where not only tuition but often board and books, and sometimes even clothes, are free, has catered to their dependent and indigent spirit. They are therefore reluctant to take upon themselves even the slight part of the burden of further propagating the churches which in their poverty they might be able to bear. As a result they miss to a degree the stimulation which comes of a sense of community of interest, of partnership in a great enterprise, and are consequently often but loosely attached to their new faith. Sometimes also the young men and women, carefully educated for careers of service in the Church, drift away from it when their training has been finished, into more attractive or lucrative pursuits.

This is but one phase of that gravest of all mis-

sionary problems, to wit, the supply and equipment of an adequate force of native workers, and through them the establishment of an independent and self-propagating native Church. Missionaries from another country can serve as pioneers. They can map out the territory, plant the lines, clear away the primary obstacles. They can serve as managers, teachers, and advisers. They can superintend the founding of schools, the building of chapels, the inauguration of a literature. But after congregations are gathered and converts are united into churches, then only those to the manner born can become successful pastors. It is clear therefore that the early development of the native church will depend upon the quality of the native ministry. The training of these ministers is at once the most important and the most difficult of the missionary's tasks.

To a limited extent advantage has been taken in Mexico of hospitals and medical work. The reception by the Mexican people of this class of work has been heartier than one would have expected, and such work will doubtless be extended in the future. The Methodists have at present establishments of this kind at Guanajuato and at Monterey, and the Adventists at Guadalajara.

The British and Foreign Bible Society, which sent an agent to Mexico in the sixties, and the American Bible Society, to which it later yielded the entire field, have been powerful agencies in the promotion of religious truth there. I have already spoken of

the almost magical effect wrought by the reading of the Bible upon those who, though Christians in belief and intention, are nevertheless very much in the dark as to the true nature of Christianity. So notable is this that all the evangelical missions openly and freely acknowledge their dependence on these societies which disseminate the Christian Scriptures. For many years the American Bible Society has covered Mexico with a network of agencies. Its colporteurs are everywhere. They precede the missionary and return again to reënforce him. Loyalty to the Bible and enthusiasm for its propagation and acceptance form a common standing-ground for diverse societies and denominations, and enable them to present to this extent, at least, a solid front to the hostility of Romanism.

It is needless to say that the work of the Protestant missions, up to the present, has been well-nigh exclusively among the people of the lowest social stratum. This has been the history of religious movements in most nations. The poor, those who have nothing to lose and all to gain; the humble, who are thereby also docile; the ignorant who, being ignorant, are willing to be instructed,—among such our Lord himself did his work, and from his day to this missionaries have followed in his footsteps. This fact, however, leads many observers to underestimate the Protestant movement in Mexico. More than one prominent Mexican, of the governing class, have

within recent years represented Protestantism there as insignificant.

But it is far from it. In the first place its numbers make it already significant, as will appear from the statistics appended to this chapter. Moreover, for every communicant there will be an average of two or more friendly "adherents," besides one or two children. The statistics of communicants may therefore safely be multiplied by five in order to exhibit the real Protestant population. Nor is this all. For the present only the poor are among the converts. The well-to-do have no disposition to mix with these. They are also bound by many social and commercial bonds. A change of religion would cost them too much. And Protestantism seems to them cheap and lacking in prestige. Nevertheless, it will prove, when they really come to know about it, far more congenial to them than is Catholicism. Already many of them are Catholics only in name. And the day is not far distant when the evangelical faith will begin to make inroads especially among the liberal-minded who openly declare their dislike of the clergy and their ways, and who are therefore trying, as best they may, to get on without religion.

Besides, those who are accepting the gospel in poverty and in humility, who have occupied hitherto an insignificant place in national affairs, are now being elevated by forces which will soon make them an important element in their country's welfare. The lower classes will not remain down when they

acquire the virtues and the intelligence which shall fit them to compete with those who have heretofore always been their unchallenged superiors. Thus pressure both from above and from below is coming to bear on the indurated social stratification of Mexico. It will not be many decades till these ancient barriers to a true democracy are shattered.

The territory of Mexico is pretty well covered by the several societies engaged in missionary operations. There is no great deal of friction among them, but rather a decided spirit of good will and cooperation. Nearly all the centers of population have one or more stations, and the work in isolated towns and villages is not infrequently more genuine and progressive than in the cities. There is not a great deal of strictly rural life among the Mexicans, who are social in their nature and spontaneously gather into villages.

The large and homogeneous groups of Indians in various mountainous sections of the country have not yet received the attention from the several boards and their missionaries which their numbers warrant. It will be well if in the early future this ground be carefully canvassed to see if it will not be worth while to furnish these peoples with missionaries and a literature in their own dialects. They have but a slight knowledge of Spanish, and are by every token legitimate objects of missionary endeavor.

Ever since President Diaz got his administration in hand he has earnestly striven to uphold the con-



stitutional provisions on the subject of religious liberty. The laws of Mexico afford ample protection for the celebration of worship according to the dictates of every man's conscience. Of course it happened often in the early years of Protestantism that ignorant and prejudiced priests incited the people to acts of persecution, and the local representatives of the civil government refused to punish or repress these breaches of the peace. But the attitude of the president has gradually become well known, and no petty official can now afford to neglect his duty at this point under penalty of losing his office. The president is not openly friendly to Protestantism, but is annoyed and humiliated by any sort of a religious riot, since he considers it a reflection upon the civilization of his country.

# STATISTICS OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS.

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| DENOMINATION.                          | Missionaries. | Native preachers. | Teachers and native helpers. | Members. | Value of property. | Date of opening work. |
|--|---------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Methodist Episcopal Church, South..... | 55            | 50                | 114                          | 6,311    | \$ 359,007 03      | 1873                  |
| Methodist Episcopal Church.....        | 28            | 36                | 52                           | 5,749*   | 876,650 00         | 1872                  |
| Presbyterian Church.....               | 21            | 49                | 45                           | 4,647    | .....              | 1872                  |
| Baptist, North and South.....          | 29            | 21                | 11                           | 2,022    | 280,300 00         | 1880                  |
| Congregational.....                    | 16            | 11                | 14                           | 1,183    | 100,000 00         | 1882                  |
| Friends.....                           | 15            | 7                 | 18                           | 655      | 42,000 00          | 1871                  |
| Southern Presbyterian.....             | 2             | 8                 | 16                           | 541      | 1,000 00           | 1874                  |
| Associate Reformed Presbyterian.....   | 11            | 7                 | .....                        | 330      | .....              | .....                 |
| Protestant Episcopal.....              | 2             | 17                | .....                        | 871      | .....              | .....                 |
| Cumberland Presbyterian.....           | 8             | 1                 | 6                            | 60       | 10,000 00          | 1888                  |
| Totals.....                            | 187           | 207               | 276                          | 22,369   | \$1,668,957 03     |                       |

\* Including probationers.

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THE scarcity of historical books concerning Mexico has been noted. Several volumes of H. H. Bancroft's comprehensive "History of the Pacific Coast" are devoted to Mexico, and the same writer prepared, or had prepared, a "Popular History of the Mexican People." The latter is colorless and unsatisfactory; the former voluminous and inaccessible. The histories of Noll, Ober, and Mrs. Hale are mere brief compilations. Noll's "From Empire to Republic" is a fairly instructive outline of the political history of the country from 1810 to 1870. It is deficient in perspective and in grasp upon the real meaning of events. The author has inserted in it an admirable bibliography, to which the reader is referred. Of serious books not specifically historical the best are Thompson's "Recollections of Mexico," Abbott's "Mexico and the United States," Butler's "Mexico in Transition," and Brown's "Latin America." Of a more popular type are Madame de la Barca's "Life in Mexico," Bishop's "Old Mexico and Her Lost Provinces," Ober's "Travels in Mexico," Gooch's "Face to Face with the Mexicans," etc. Lummis's "Awakening of a Nation" is sensational and unreliable. Romero's "Mexico and the United States" contains much valuable matter.



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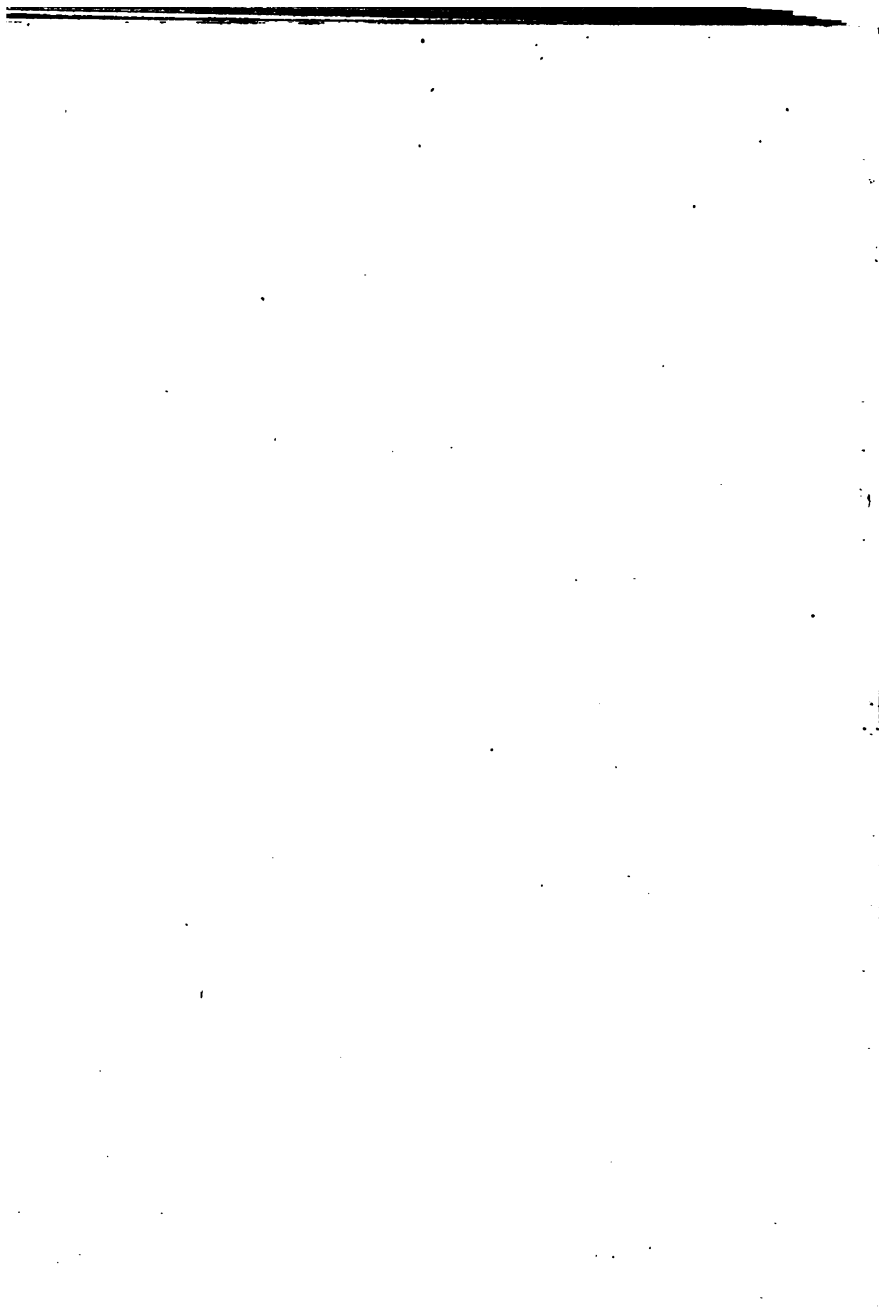
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