

official indifference had even granted permission to private enterprise to undertake colonial adventures. Spain was a hundred years before England in colonizing the New World, and much more than a hundred years before her in developing a consistent and well-planned system of colonial administration, and the most conspicuous, as well as the most powerful of the institutions introduced into Mexico by the Spanish government was the Catholic Church, with its powerful adjunct, the Holy Inquisition. During the whole period of Spanish supremacy religious influences were quite as important as political, and left a far deeper mark on the manners, morals, and intellectual tendencies of the people.

Between them the Spanish governors and the Roman clergy contrived to create and preserve rigid and uncompromising religious uniformity. The welfare of the church was borne in mind by the civil authorities quite as anxiously as the welfare of the state. To keep religion pure, heresy was as carefully excluded from the Spanish colonies as foreign visitors or foreign manufactures, and it was in order that this work should be thoroughly done that the Inquisition was first imported into New Spain.

In the half century that followed the Spanish conquest the bishops had exercised inquisitorial powers, and they so continued until Philip II determined that the work was too heavy for them. He had found that reformers were introducing heretical books and translations of the Scripture into the New World, and were even attempting to send missionaries in the guise of Flemish and German traders, who, as Spanish subjects, were permitted to visit the colonies. In order to preserve the faith and to pursue the heretics—whom the King pleasantly characterized as wolves and dogs—a branch of the Inquisition was established in Mexico in November, 1570, and it exercised a wide-spread and highly efficient jurisdiction for two hundred and fifty years. Indeed, so efficient was the machinery that in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries the tribunal almost came to an end for want of business. There were no heretics left, and complaints of bigamy, witchcraft, and

soliciting by priests in the confessional became almost the only cases tried before it.

A more active branch of the business was the censorship of books and pictures, and these functions became more important when the outbreak of the French revolution led to the spread of a spirit of liberalism throughout the world. That spirit became more and more earnest, until it assumed extravagant forms when Hidalgo raised the cry of independence, and thenceforward the Inquisition was a willing coadjutor of the military power in seeking to suppress the revolutionists. Hidalgo and Morelos, being priests, were both tried by the Holy Office.

The liberal Spanish Cortes in 1813 decreed the suppression of the Inquisition, but it was re-established by Ferdinand VII immediately upon his restoration in the following year. There was therefore a short period of about eighteen months during which the functions of the Inquisition were dormant; but in 1820, after Riego's rebellion, the Inquisition was finally suppressed in Mexico, and on June 16th of the same year it was officially reported that the tribunal had ceased all its functions and that it remained in a condition of absolute extinction. It never was revived.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended what an eminent Spanish author described as "one of our most national and purest institutions,"<sup>2</sup> but its age-long influence over national character and modes of thought continued until at least a generation had passed away.

The suppression of the Inquisition was by no means the only modification in ecclesiastical matters which the revolutions in Spain and Mexico brought about, although in the latter country at least the changes effected were extensive rather than radical. The wealth and numbers of the clergy were reduced, but the legal situation and the moral influence of the Church of Rome were not, at first, seriously affected.

Under the government of the Catholic Kings the church

<sup>1</sup> Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, 196-299.

<sup>2</sup> "El Santo Oficio, una de nuestras más españolas y castizas instituciones."—(Menendez y Pelayo, *Ciencia Española*, II, 95.)

establishment in New Spain had so prospered that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were probably not less than ten thousand of the clergy, divided nearly equally between the regular and secular bodies, who enjoyed revenues from tithes, fees for masses, and other sources, amounting to several million dollars a year. They also administered an immense property in the numerous cathedrals, churches, and convents scattered throughout the settled districts. Besides the ecclesiastical buildings, they held large amounts of productive real estate, and a variety of trust funds, aggregating upward of forty million dollars, mainly invested in mortgages.<sup>1</sup> It was estimated that, either through direct ownership or by way of mortgage, the church controlled two-thirds of the land in the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the clergy, there were lay brothers, servitors, and nuns whose numbers brought the estimated total of those "in religion" up to thirteen or fourteen thousand.

The numbers and wealth of the religious persons in Mexico were indeed trifling compared either with the multitudes who lived by the church in Spain, or with the riches it had accumulated,<sup>3</sup> but the drain upon the economic resources of a poor country was steady and severe.

To a needy government the funds of the church offered a perpetual attraction, and few revolutionary administrations in either Old or New Spain failed to help themselves out of that abundant store. Not more than twenty millions of the principal of the church funds in Mexico remained in 1825, and it was with difficulty that either principal or interest could be collected from mortgageors. The church lands and buildings, however, were as yet untouched by the civil authorities, but measures were already under discussion looking to confiscation of the whole of the church property. It was also in contemplation to take from the clergy the collection of tithes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt, *Essai Politique*, II, 474-476.

<sup>2</sup> Romero, *Mexico*, 340.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of the Spanish church near the end of the eighteenth century see Desdevizes du Dezert, I, 38-120.

<sup>4</sup> Poinsett to Adams, April 26, 1827; *Poinsett MSS.*

The federal authorities were moreover engaged in a controversy over the *patronato* or power of appointment to church benefices. Trivial and sordid as such a dispute over patronage might seem, it yet involved consequences of a most serious character. The facts were simple. During the period of Spanish rule in Mexico all church preferment was in the hands of the crown by virtue of a concordat with the Holy See.<sup>1</sup> The moment independence was attained the question arose whether the ecclesiastical patronage theretofore vested in the Catholic King passed with other governmental powers to the new rulers of Mexico, or whether it was a personal privilege which had been vested in the King and his royal successors only, and which therefore could not be exercised by revolutionary authorities until revived by a new grant from the Sovereign Pontiff.

The clergy naturally maintained the latter view, the government the former, and as there was no one to decide the controversy but the Pope himself, one of the first acts of the new government was, as we have seen, to send an envoy to Rome; but, as the Roman Curia declined to receive him, no adjustment was then possible. It was not until 1830 that even a provisional *modus vivendi* could be hit upon,<sup>2</sup> and even after the independence of Mexico was formally recognized by the Holy See no definite settlement was arrived at—the Mexican clergy opposing all proposed solutions.

In this unsatisfactory state matters continued during the whole of the period covered by the present history. The church in Mexico, as a direct result of the revolution, paradoxically became more and more reactionary and ultramontane. The higher clergy were transformed from respectful servants of the crown into consistent opponents of the rulers of the state, and became active participants in almost every

<sup>1</sup> The relations between the Spanish government and the church were latterly regulated mainly by the concordat of 1753, which was continued in force in Spain until the middle of the nineteenth century. See Rousseau, *Règne de Charles III*, I, 111-115.

<sup>2</sup> Under the laws of May 22, 1829, and Feb. 17, 1830.—(Dublan y Lozano, II, 109, 226.)

political contest. With even more reason than Gambetta might Mexican liberals have proclaimed: "*Le Cléricalisme—voilà l'ennemi!*"<sup>1</sup>

The numbers of the clergy had also seriously diminished since Spanish times. Many priests, like Hidalgo and Morelos, had taken up arms in the revolution and had either been killed or had permanently abandoned the religious life. On the other hand, some of the higher clergy, the Archbishop of Mexico for example, had fled to Spain.<sup>2</sup> The refusal of the Papal government to recognize the Mexican republic caused other serious difficulties as time went by, for since the Mexican government had no diplomatic relations with the Holy See, nominations for bishoprics or cathedral benefices were not, for a long time, recognized, and the consequence was that episcopal vacancies remained unfilled, ordinations became difficult, or, in remote parts of the country, impossible, and the attractions of clerical life were in many indirect ways diminished.<sup>3</sup> From one cause or another it was reckoned that the total number of ecclesiastics had fallen off in 1825 to less than two-thirds of what it was at the beginning of the century. The diminution was principally apparent in the regular clergy, where it was contemporaneous with a great reduction in the revenues of the several convents.

Nevertheless the influence of the church upon the great mass of the people was not perceptibly diminished. One of the leading features of the constitutional documents of that day, the treaty of Cordova, the plan of Iguala, and the Constitution of 1824, was the provision that the national religion should be that of Rome, and that the exercise of any other should be prohibited. This erection of religious intol-

<sup>1</sup> Alaman in his *Historia de Méjico*, V, 906-909, gives the clerical view of the controversy over the *patronato*. For the anti-clerical view, see the introduction to the fifth volume of *Méjico á través de los Siglos*, pp. xxii-xxxii, by José M. Vigil.

<sup>2</sup> See Zavala, *Revolución de Méjico*, I, 369-372.

<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1830 that the first nomination to a bishopric was confirmed by the Pope. But the places of the bishops who had fled to Spain were never filled as long as the incumbents lived.—(Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, VI, 581, note.)

erance into a principle of government was in exact accordance with public opinion. The Mexican revolution had never had any of the characteristics of the French revolution. On the contrary, it had originated in a determination that a French sovereign and French ideas should not rule New Spain, and it had been supported to a great extent and even led by members of the clergy. Independence had been first proclaimed by the mouths of the rural priesthood; the justice of the cause had been advocated by them in the confessional;<sup>1</sup> the insurgents had marched under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe; and the military mutiny at Iguala had been planned and financed by dignitaries of the church. It was therefore not surprising that throughout Mexico the influence of the priest as the friend, adviser, and protector of his flock continued substantially unshaken after the revolution.

Religious observances exhibited the grosser features of the Spanish and Italian Catholicism of that age, combined with some grotesque local practices. There were Mexican legends of saints of whom European Catholics had never heard, and whose memory was perpetuated by showy ceremonies and by pictures which foreigners thought hideous. Miraculous images were not uncommon.<sup>2</sup> Rockets and Roman candles, fiddling and dancing were usual accompaniments of religious celebrations.<sup>3</sup> "An eminent Mexican ecclesiastic" is said to have summed up the religious condition of his countrymen in the words, "*son muy buenos Católicos, pero muy malos Cristianos*" (they are excellent Catholics but very poor Christians), and the phrase was not unjust.<sup>4</sup>

The changes effected by the revolution caused other serious difficulties besides those which arose out of the lack of recognition by the Holy See. Thus when foreigners were allowed freely to enter and reside in the country, many of them were Protestants; and, even though they did not openly

<sup>1</sup> Viceroy Calleja to the Minister of War, Aug. 18, 1814; quoted in Ward's *Mexico*, I, 520; and see same volume, 502.

<sup>2</sup> Lyon's *Mexico*, I, 65, 80, 103-107; II, 27. Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico*, 105-115, 189.

<sup>3</sup> Mayer's *Mexico*, 142-155.

<sup>4</sup> Ward's *Mexico*, I, 250.

practise their religion, their presence gave rise to questions not easily solved. Mixed marriages were considered impossible, and Protestant funerals were the occasion for distressing scenes.<sup>1</sup> Protestant missions could not be tolerated, although the federal government was not disposed to interfere with the sale of the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

All education was, as a matter of course, under the strict control of the church. Here, as elsewhere in the Spanish dominions, from the first days of Spanish sovereignty to its close, "all advances of the human mind in the line of independent thinking, which disregarded tradition and the influence of religious and empirical forms, were . . . anathema."<sup>3</sup>

Within the limits prescribed by the Roman Church, however, the policy of Spain was not ungenerous. One of the main objects of both the church and the Spanish crown had been from the very first to christianize the Indians, and for this purpose an early decree had imposed upon the holders of royal grants of land the obligation of teaching their laborers religion and good manners (*la doctrina y buena policia*), and of maintaining a priest in each Indian village.<sup>4</sup> The practices of the church were accordingly duly taught, although without burdening the humble scholars with the arts of reading and writing. At the period of independence the vast majority of the inhabitants of Mexico were entirely illiterate.<sup>5</sup>

In the cities the proportion of those who could read or write was doubtless greater. For those who could afford to pay there were schools of no very great degree of excellence.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 263; Lyon's *Mexico*, I, 182; Mayer's *Mexico*, 141; *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XI, 168. In 1824 a special burying ground was allotted "for foreigners who do not profess the exclusive religion of the state." See H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., 460; Fagoaga to Butler, Nov. 22, 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Poinsett to secretary of Am. Bible Society, June 2, 1826; *Poinsett MSS.*

<sup>3</sup> Philippine census of 1905, I, 336.

<sup>4</sup> *Recopilación de Indias*, ley 37, tit. 9, lib. 6.

<sup>5</sup> One of the Spanish viceroys, the Marquis de Branciforte, was accused of saying that it was enough for Americans to teach them their catechism ("*que en América no se debía dar más instrucción que el catecismo*"). The remark, whether he made it or not, illustrates the latter-day attitude of the Spanish authorities, who were content to let the Indians grow up without other education than some imperfect and scanty knowledge of the tenets of their church.

"Their method of teaching," wrote the American minister, "resembles that practised by the Arabs, and the boys may be heard a square off bawling out their lessons all together. It costs the parents a trifle . . . and most of them send their boys to school where they are taught to read, to write, to repeat prayers, and to cross themselves. The girls are not generally so fortunate and fewer among them read or write."<sup>1</sup>

The number of scholars was never very great. According to the census made in 1793 the total number in the city of Mexico was less than fourteen hundred, of whom seventy-eight were Indians.<sup>2</sup> There were similar schools in other large cities, such as Guadalajara and Puebla, but it was considered doubtful whether there were over three thousand children at school at any one time. The more liberal spirit which accompanied the revolution awakened the idea of general popular education, and efforts, more or less local and spasmodic, were made to accomplish that end. It is probable that the percentage of illiteracy had been materially reduced during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The higher education was not much better cared for. The University of Mexico was founded in 1551, and other universities established later at Michoacan, Guadalajara, Chiapas, and Merida never attained any vigorous existence. As in the Spanish universities, the course of study remained almost mediæval, and examinations for degrees were puerile. Theology, canon and civil law, rhetoric and the Aristotelian philosophy, comprised the bulk of the instruction; the study of Greek and of modern languages was little known, and research was discouraged. In Mexico the programme was much the same, but even greater importance was attached to theology.<sup>3</sup>

As early as 1578 a chair of medicine was established in the

<sup>1</sup> Poinsett to secretary of Am. Bible Society, June 2, 1826; *Poinsett MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Humboldt, *Essai Politique*, II, 837.

<sup>3</sup> As to the Spanish universities at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, see Desdevizes du Dezert, *L'Espagne de l'Ancien Régime*, III, 186-205; Rousseau, *Règne de Charles III*, II, 313-325; Doblado's *Letters from Spain*, 109-117. In 1825 out of eighty professors in Mexican seminaries (who taught 1,444 students) there were twenty-four in theology, six

University of Mexico and other professorships were added later, and in 1768 a royal college for surgeons was founded. A large and well-equipped school of mines was founded in 1791, which occupied spacious and handsome buildings where chemistry, geology, physics, mineralogy, and mathematics were taught.<sup>1</sup> An academy of fine arts and a botanical garden were also prosperous and well frequented. Humboldt, visiting Mexico in 1803, expressed himself surprised at the artistic zeal, the architectural ability, and the knowledge of botany, chemistry, and mathematics which he discovered.<sup>2</sup> The civil wars had, of course, caused the decay of all these institutions. Governments which could barely keep themselves in existence had no money to spare for universities or the fine arts.<sup>3</sup>

In considering the condition of education in Mexico it is not to be forgotten that in 1825 education of every grade in the United States was also at a low ebb. The earlier American settlers had generally entertained very liberal views as to the importance of establishing schools for the people, but their efforts had resulted, after two centuries, in nothing that could be regarded as a well-ordered system. With the increasing prosperity of the country in the period after the second war with England, doubts began to arise in many minds as to the adequacy of existing conditions; but in 1825 little had been done to remedy the situation. Horace Mann was still practising law and De Witt Clinton was meditating his recommendations to the legislature of New York. Universal, free, and compulsory primary education, under the control of the state, which has become the ideal of most American commonwealths, was as yet far from realization; and the thirty-five small colleges scattered throughout the

in canon law, three in Holy Scriptures and church history, and one in "ceremonies." There were twenty-three in Latin and rhetoric, sixteen in philosophy, four in "civil and natural" law, one in "public constitutional law," one in Spanish and grammar, and one in "the Mexican language." There was no instruction in mathematics or science, or in Greek or Hebrew, even for intending priests.—(*Memoria que leyó el Secretario de justicia y negocios eclesiásticos . . . enero 1826.*)

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt, *Essai Politique*, I, 121.   <sup>2</sup> *Essai Politique*, I, 118-124, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Poinsett, *Notes on Mexico*, 82-84.

country offered but a narrow and antiquated course of the elementary classical and mathematical studies.

Whatever may be thought of the relative educational facilities in Mexico, there can be no doubt as to its literature. Literature can hardly be said to have existed in New Spain at all. By far the greater part of the population were unable to read, and the small minority of colonists who possessed that art were principally Spaniards by birth or immediate descent who preferred peninsular to colonial authors.

Even in Spain, literature had not exactly flourished under a paternal government in the eighteenth century or during the early years of the nineteenth. Even as late as 1802 the importation of foreign books was practically forbidden on account of "the irreparable injury caused to religion and the State by the reading of wicked books." The strictest censorship was likewise exercised over native productions. An author, before he could publish, must obtain a license from some specified authority. If he wrote on banking or commerce, he must get the permission of the Junta of Commerce; if he wrote of the colonies, he must have the authority of the Council of the Indies; if of medicine, a license must be secured from the *protomedicato*; and if of geography, from the Academy of History. Discussions of public affairs and translations of the Bible were absolutely prohibited. Translations of the offices of the church into Spanish were permitted, but only under special license from the King himself.<sup>1</sup>

The troubles of the author were by no means at an end when he had got his license. The Inquisition was on the watch for every book or pamphlet that came from the press, and was ready to confiscate copies and imprison the writer if his views could be regarded as savoring of heresy. The agents of the Holy Office in the colonies were even more active and zealous than in Spain itself, and their vigilance was sometimes triumphant in detecting dangerous errors in books that had been suffered to pass the scrutiny of the home authorities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Desdevizes du Dezert, III, 224-228.

<sup>2</sup> Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, 264, 274.

It very naturally followed that although a printing-press was established in the city of Mexico in 1536—one hundred and four years before the publication in Massachusetts of the Bay Psalm Book—the long list of books printed in New Spain contains hardly a single work of genuine literature. There are, indeed, a vast number of odes of welcome to viceroys, and verses on the births, coronations, marriages, and deaths of members of the royal family. There are innumerable books of devotion, tracts for the Indians, grammars of the native tongues for the use of missionaries. Funeral sermons are a favorite vehicle of expression. Pleadings in important lawsuits, occasional works on jurisprudence and medicine and on geography and astronomy also figure in the list. But philosophy, politics, most of the natural sciences, romance, and unofficial verse are absent.

The learned Dr. Beristain, whose *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana Septentrional*, published in 1816, is still the most complete of Mexican bibliographies, admits fully the one-sided character of the writings he catalogues.

“I know very well,” he says in his introduction, “that all of the contents of this book, except a dozen items, will be regarded by the delicate palates of the learned, in this age of irreligion, libertinism and materialism, as mere rubbish fit for the flames, being only monuments of the fanaticism and superstition of devotees and aristotelian monks. How many lives, they will say, of the Saints! How many panegyrics! How many treatises *de Naturâ Dei* and *de Trinitate!* How many legal documents! How many books of devotion! But where, they will ask with Robertson—the Pliny of America—where are the new inventions and discoveries? Where are the new truths in science and art?”

And the worthy father goes on to explain that Spanish America had never pretended to boast of its literature, and that it claimed only the credit of producing a series of worthy disciples of the learned Spaniards of the sixteenth century. It was, in truth, the aim and object of those who controlled the publication of books in New Spain, up to the very end of the Spanish dominion, to avoid dangerous novelties. The science, the theology, the history, and the litera-

ture of the sixteenth century were all that Mexicans were to be permitted to have. The force of conservatism could no further go.

It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the very different conditions that prevailed in the British colonies. The earlier instructions to the provincial governors did, indeed, generally contain a clause to the effect that no printing-press should be set up and no book printed without the governor's license, but little or no effort seems to have been made to assert this power, and after Queen Anne's time the clause was omitted. Even the newspaper press was never seriously molested by the British authorities. As early as 1721 a resolution of the Massachusetts legislature that a licensing system would be attended by “innumerable inconveniences and dangers” served as a sufficient warning, and the result of the Zenger case in New York, fourteen years later, established forever the liberty of the press.

The people of the thirteen colonies and their descendants and successors even far into the nineteenth century could hardly have been described as lovers of art and letters. Certainly they added little to the artistic or literary or scientific treasures of mankind. But at least their governments left them free to wander at will through the pleasant regions of poetry and romance, and to pursue as they chose the learning of all the ages.

The revolution in Mexico put an immediate end to the systems of licensing and censorship that had been so marked a feature of Spanish rule; nevertheless, the habits of generations were not easily got rid of and the blight of continual civil war hindered the development of literature. Books were at least double the price that they were in Europe. And at a time when the New York Society Library numbered twenty thousand volumes and there were small subscription libraries in every country town in the United States, there was not a circulating library in Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

The first newspaper in America was the official *Gaceta de México*, but so long as Spain was in control this, or a harmless

<sup>1</sup> Calderon, *Life in Mexico*, 172.

*Mercurio Volante* or *Diario Mercantil*, was all that was permitted to exist. The Constitution of 1824 proclaimed the new order of things, and was emphatic in declaring that the political freedom of the press should never be suspended, "much less abolished"; and a number of newspapers were early established in every part of the country.

In 1825 the *Aguila Mexicana* was, or tried to appear, the official organ at the national capital. *El Sol*, the conservative paper, was regarded as reactionary and even monarchical; and its motto, *Post nubila Phoebus*, was understood to mean that the weather under the republic was extremely bad but that the sun of Spain would soon return.<sup>1</sup> The *Correo de la Federación* was the radical or Yorkino organ; the *Fantasma* was essentially anti-clerical.<sup>2</sup>

In the provinces a number of more or less ephemeral publications caused constant irritation to the central government. In one way or another it was possible to control the newspapers of the metropolis, but it often happened that local journals were protected by those who were not at all in accordance with the policies of the President for the time being, so that in general the press of the country was a constant thorn in the side of the successive Mexican administrations. In its way it seems to have represented with sufficient fulness the varying opinions and moods of the relatively small groups whose ideas constituted public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Beltrami, *Le Mexique*, II, 258.    <sup>2</sup> Suarez, *Historia de México*, 59, 60.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO (CONTINUED)

A most important and striking difference between Mexico and the United States was the entire absence of water communications in the former country. In the United States, at a time when railroads were only just being planned, the main internal routes of commerce and travel were along the great rivers and other water-ways which were a marked feature of the country. The finest steam-boats in the world plied on the Mississippi and the Ohio, the Hudson and the Delaware, Lake Champlain and Long Island Sound. The Erie Canal was the longest in existence, and others were building or projected all over the country. In Mexico, on the contrary, there were practically no navigable rivers, and any extensive system of canals was made impossible by the very slight rainfall of the interior. Even the coasting trade, so active and important along the Atlantic coast of the United States, was all but impossible in Mexico, owing in great measure to the lack of safe harbors.

The internal commerce of the country was therefore carried on by road. But the Spanish colonists had never proved themselves successful road-builders in any part of their great empire. The mule-paths of New Spain—even those connecting the capital with Vera Cruz and Acapulco—were for generations neither better nor worse than those which led from the sea-coast to Bogotá or Quito. It was only in the early years of the nineteenth century that the Vera Cruz road was made into a paved *chaussée* over which heavy coaches and wagons could pass with reasonable safety.

The revolution, however, wrecked this fine road as it wrecked many other solid monuments of Spanish rule. In part, the destruction had been deliberate, but in large part