

been practising local self-government, and for fifty years had had the bracing experiences of independent national life.

Between two neighboring nations so singularly ill-assorted, a land frontier stretched for nearly twenty-five hundred miles through a vast region that was as yet almost wholly unpopulated and was very nearly unknown. It certainly did not need any great degree of political foresight to perceive that, sooner or later, questions arising along this far-extended line were bound to give occasion for serious differences, and that in the conflict of interests the weaker nation was extremely likely to go to the wall.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF MEXICO

THE Spaniards first came to Mexico as conquerors, not as colonists. They were neither seeking an outlet for an overcrowded population, nor new avenues for trade. What they really hoped to discover were opportunities of wealth for a few lucky adventurers, and to this must always be added a sincere religious determination to convert the heathen—by force, if necessary.

The British colonies were established under totally opposite conditions. The needs born of the economic status of the country first directed the English, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her successor, to the fruitful field of emigration.<sup>1</sup> A little later, during the twenty years that preceded the meeting of the Long Parliament, the persecuting zeal of the Church of England also operated to force reluctant thousands into seeking new homes beyond the Atlantic. After the first venture into that unknown country successive generations of British emigrants went soberly forth in search of virgin lands. They went to seek farms, not gold mines. They did not gather into cities, but were scattered in little agricultural settlements that multiplied and were pushed slowly but constantly inland. They were not aided in any material respect by the British government, neither were they controlled by the Church of England. They made no systematic efforts to christianize the natives. They took care of themselves without the support of a military force or a state church, and they settled where they pleased and established their own forms of local government and their own laws. There were marked differences between the several colonies from New Hampshire to Georgia, and be-

<sup>1</sup> Leroy-Beaulieu, *Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes*, 87.

tween the same colonies at different periods of their history; but as time passed differences tended to disappear, and the middle of the eighteenth century saw fairly developed two fundamental beliefs which were essentially characteristic of the whole group—the first a broad religious tolerance, and the second a firmly settled conviction of the right to local self-government. The true underlying spirit of the British colonists, as it ultimately developed, was never more strikingly set forth than in the civil compact of the Providence Plantation, signed in 1637.

“We whose names are hereunder,” ran the agreement, “desirous to inhabitt in ye Towne of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active and passive obedience to all such orders and agreements as shall be made for public good of ye body, in an orderly way, by the major consent of the present inhabitants, Maisters of families incorporated together in a Towne fellowship and others whom they shall admitt unto them *only in civill things.*”<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of independence inherent in the British colonists being matched by a like untamable spirit among the Indians with whom they came in contact, and the home government lending no assistance, there ensued necessarily a long and desperate struggle with these formidable enemies. Much may be said of the unchristian and vindictive manner in which this warfare was carried on, but it is unquestionably true that it helped to develop those sturdy and self-reliant qualities which so strongly characterized the pioneer settlers and frontiersmen in the United States.

The same differences of purpose that had inspired the earliest efforts at American colonization, and the same contrast in methods and objects that had characterized the British and Spanish settlements, respectively, continued manifest even through the first quarter of the nineteenth century in the processes of growth of the United States and New Spain.

The expansion of the western frontier of the United States was an unconscious development—as cruel and un-

<sup>1</sup>Rhode Island Colonial Records, I, 14.

sparing as nature and as inevitable as the healthy growth of a plant—and it was unaided, as it was unrestricted, by the paternal hand of the government. An endless variety of motives and emotions were constantly operating to urge the inhabitants of the settled East to seek their fortunes beyond the Alleghanies. The mere love of adventure, the spirit of speculation, the reasonable hope of attaining at an early age professional or political prizes, influenced some. For those who were in distress or in debt, or were discontented, the Mississippi valley was a hopeful refuge. But that which affected the minds of most was unquestionably the national hunger for land, the eager desire to become a freeholder, an independent and self-supporting citizen, to be the head of a household and the owner of a home. The same imperious desire which had animated the German forest tribes in their western and southern migrations centuries before had driven for two hundred years successive generations of American settlers into the wilderness, and had supported them through incredible hardships, in famine, in sickness, and in all the hideous risks of Indian warfare.

Nor did satiety follow possession. The fruitful and unoccupied lands of the continent were there for those who dared to take them. To the adventurous and the hopeful there was the ever-present prospect of still more attractive lands still further west, and on many minds a first removal (whether successful or the reverse) operated only as an inducement to tempt fortune once more.

The type of the restless and dissatisfied frontiersmen was entirely novel to the officials of more paternal governments. De Laussat, who had been appointed by Napoleon in 1802 prefect of Louisiana, gave a humorous description of these people.

“There is a class,” he wrote, “of Anglo-Americans who make it their business to push constantly forward into the deserts of America, fifty leagues in advance of the population. They are the first to immigrate, to clear the land, and to people it; and time and time again they move on with no other object or profession than that of opening the way for future settlers. . . . They run up their shanties, cut down

and burn the timber, kill the Indians or are killed by them, and disappear from the locality either through death, or through a quick sale of the half-cleared land to some more permanent husbandman. As soon as a score of settlers are collected at any point, two printers make their appearance, one a federalist, the other an anti-federalist; then come the doctors, then the lawyers, then the speculators; toasts are drunk; a speaker is elected; they proclaim themselves a city; they beget children at a wonderful rate. . . . A district under the Spaniards or the French may have been begun, abandoned, begun again, and ruined once more, and so on over and over again until its destiny for life or death is finally determined. Under the Anglo-Americans, a new-born state may advance with a greater or a less degree of prosperity; but it is certain never to go back. It always keeps on, growing and becoming stronger."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing could be in greater contrast than the methods adopted to settle the northern possessions of New Spain. There was none of the "fierce spirit of liberty," not a trace of that "wise and salutary neglect," which Burke thought had contributed so much to the growth of the British colonies. The hand of the central authorities at the city of Mexico interfered in every detail of every settlement, selected those who were to take part, planned their route, regulated their lives, and furnished their military escort.

The religious motive was almost always prominent. The conversion of the natives to Christianity continued to be a perfectly genuine object with the Spanish government, as it was an end to which hundreds of hard-working friars devoted their inconspicuous and humble lives, not without success.

The oldest of the settlements on the northern frontier was New Mexico, which dated back to the closing years of the sixteenth century. Nine years before the English ships landed their passengers at Jamestown Don Juan de Oñate, with the sanction and aid of the viceroy of New Spain, was leading a successful expedition to the upper waters of the Rio Grande.<sup>2</sup> On April 30, 1598, probably not far from the

<sup>1</sup> De Laussat, *Mémoires sur Ma Vie*, quoted in Villiers du Terrage, *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Française*, 408.

<sup>2</sup> Oñate was a native of New Spain. His expedition was organized under a contract with the viceroy, by the terms of which the King was to furnish arms,

present city of El Paso, he crossed the river and took formal possession, in the King's name, of New Mexico and all the adjoining provinces. His party consisted of about four hundred men, of whom a hundred and thirty were accompanied by their wives and children,<sup>1</sup> a number of servants and Indians, ten friars, eighty-three wagons, and seven thousand head of cattle.

The natives were not unfriendly, or at least not actively hostile, so that there was no very serious difficulty in settling the country and establishing mission churches. Exploring expeditions were sent out in various directions and a good general knowledge of the surrounding regions was obtained at a comparatively early day.

The troubles of the settlement, such as they were, arose at first from internal disputes, chiefly between the civil authorities and the missionaries as to their respective jurisdiction over the local Indians. Many thousands of these people were subdued and baptized, but the number of civilized inhabitants (*gente de razon*) remained small. Even as late as 1680 there were probably only about twenty-four hundred Mexicans in the whole province of New Mexico.

The native Indians, as a rule, were easily controlled. They had always lived, and they continued to live, in large villages or *pueblos*. Each pueblo had its church, and near it crops of corn and cotton were raised under the eye of the priests and subject to the eventual control of a small garrison at Santa Fe. The Pueblo Indians were held to strict obedience, and indeed were generally regarded as children, to be treated according to the maxims of Solomon. If they misbehaved the rod was not spared. For more serious offences they might be imprisoned or hanged.

Late in the seventeenth century, however, a general In-ammunition, and priests, while Oñate was to furnish at his own expense a specified number of soldiers. In return for his labor and expenditure he was to be made governor, *adelantado* and captain-general of the territories he colonized, and was to receive certain grants of land and other rights and privileges.

<sup>1</sup> Then and long afterward Mexican soldiers were generally accompanied by numbers of women and children, just as the Soudanese troops march in Egypt.

dian revolt occurred. Many Mexicans were killed and the whole province had to be evacuated, but after an interval of some twelve years of anarchy it was reoccupied permanently.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the slow growth of the Spanish power the area of the settlements did not increase. The Navajos, Utes, Apaches, and Comanches who surrounded them could not be persuaded to adopt a peaceful agricultural life. Among such tribes the Spanish government never permanently extended its possessions, and the wavering and irregular frontier of New Spain always indicated pretty closely the line of demarcation between peaceful and warlike tribes of Indians.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the numbers of the pure-blooded Indians native to the soil had diminished in New Mexico to something less than ten thousand, while the numbers of the Mexicans had grown to nearly twenty thousand, mostly through natural increase. There had been little immigration. The province was not very different from the rest of New Spain, except for the presence of the Pueblo Indians, who lived apart under the tutelage of the Franciscan friars.

Beyond the virtue of moderate and regular industry these converts had few of the Christian graces. "The Indians," says Bancroft, "were in no sense Christians, but they liked the padres in comparison with other Spaniards, and were willing to comply with certain harmless church formalities, which they neither understood nor cared to understand. They had lost all hope of successful revolt, but were devotedly attached to their homes and their ancestral ways of pueblo life; dreaded apostasy, because it involved a precarious existence among hostile tribes of savages; and thus, as a choice of evils, they lived and died as nominal Christians and Spanish subjects, or perhaps more properly slaves."<sup>2</sup>

The country was purely agricultural. There was no min-

<sup>1</sup> See "The Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680," by Charles Wilson Hackett, in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XV, 93-147; and "Retreat of the Spaniards from New Mexico in 1680," by the same author, in *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 137-168, 259-276.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, *Hist. of Arizona and New Mexico*, 271.

ing and no manufactures, and of necessity little commerce of any kind. It was only after Mexican independence had been assured that trade with the United States, or, indeed, any kind of intercourse, became legally possible. Trappers and traders had visited New Mexican territory during the period of Spanish rule, but they had always been arrested, and imprisoned or expelled, as soon as their presence became known. In 1807 Lieutenant Pike, in command of a small exploring expedition sent out by the United States government, visited New Mexico. He had trespassed, not quite innocently, on what was unquestionably Spanish territory, and he and all his men were in like manner arrested and sent to Chihuahua, and then, after a short and easy imprisonment, were sent back to the United States. But as soon as an independent government was established, probably as early as 1821, a regular commerce was established between St. Louis and Santa Fe, which rapidly assumed considerable proportions.<sup>1</sup>

In 1825 the population of New Mexico was probably not far from forty thousand—the numbers of the Pueblo Indians remaining stationary and the numbers of the Mexicans increasing from about twenty to about thirty thousand. Since 1800 some attempts had been made at rude manufactures, and possibly some at mining. There were no colleges or public schools, no lawyers, and few physicians. There were no municipal bodies and no courts. The government was a paternal despotism, nominally tempered by a right of appeal from the governor to the far distant *audiencia* of Guadalajara. And all through the long war of independence this remote and pastoral community had remained neutral and undisturbed.

Upper and Lower California remained, like New Mexico, missionary jurisdictions until a comparatively late period,

<sup>1</sup> See Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, two vols. The Mexican government, it should be noted, was for some time unfavorable to the opening of the Santa Fe trail, as they feared it might be made a means of territorial acquisition by the United States. Clay, as Secretary of State, took pains to point out that no such danger was to be apprehended.—(Clay to Poinsett, Sept. 24, 1825; *Amer. St. Papers, For. Rel.*, VI, 581.)

although the missions along the shores of the Pacific were very unlike those along the Rio Grande. The first settlement of the Californias was made under purely religious auspices. There was no contract with any enterprising *conquistador*, and no grants of land or patents of nobility were offered as an inducement to settlers. The leaders of the earliest expeditions were animated by no hope of wealth or worldly advantage, but simply and sincerely by an ardent faith and a desire for the advancement of the church. For this they and their followers gladly gave their lives.

Lower California was the source from which all the missions proceeded. That peninsula was first occupied by the Jesuits about the end of the seventeenth century in pursuance of the remarkable colonial policy of the society, of which the most conspicuously successful example was exhibited in Paraguay. The theory, in a general way, upon which the society proceeded was that the natives of America were free men who could not justly be enslaved, and were the lawful owners of land of which they could not justly be deprived; that the Pope had given to the Kings of Spain authority over the New World solely in order that the Indians might be converted to the true religion;<sup>1</sup> and that consequently all the Spanish authority necessarily rested upon the condition of their spreading the gospel among the heathen. The object, therefore, for which the society strove was to adapt the savage tribes to civilized life, and it was intended that their territory should never be occupied by Europeans. To this end, the missionaries were to establish Indian villages, each surrounded by so much land as would suffice to support the inhabitants. The missions were not to be permanent institutions, but rather schools to teach the heathen to become Christian subjects of the Catholic King. In theory, the Indian proselytes were to be regarded as children at school, subject to all the restraints and liable to

<sup>1</sup> The bull *Inter caetera* (May 4, 1493), after reciting that it is the purpose of Ferdinand and Isabella to subdue the newly discovered lands and islands and reduce them to the Catholic faith, continues: "*Nos igitur hujusmodi vestrum sanctum et laudabile propositum plurimum in Domino commendantes . . . donamus, concedimus,*" etc.—(Navarrete, *Viages*, II, 30.)

all the punishments which that age regarded as suitable for school-children. In particular the beneficial effect of steady work was to be insisted on, and the Indians were not to be allowed to resume their roving habits or wander from the missions. But steady work was just what North American Indians objected to. Sometimes they could be induced to give work in exchange for food, but "the main difficulty," as an apologist for the missions naively writes, "was to make the converts regard it as a duty to be performed on moral grounds."<sup>1</sup> Especially was this difficulty felt in the barren country of Lower California, where water was scarce and only the scantiest crops could be grown, but somehow by tact, patience, and infinite courage the friars did achieve a certain limited measure of success.

The expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish possessions in 1767 was a heavy blow to the missions. The injury, however, was soon repaired more or less thoroughly by the arrival of a body of Franciscans under the leadership of a man of the utmost energy and force of character—Junípero Serra. But by this time the Spanish authorities had begun to meddle with the progress of the missions, and the results were not generally conducive to morality or good order. A large part of Serra's work consisted in adjusting the relations of his clergy with the Spanish soldiers.

In 1769 the work of the Franciscan missionaries was pushed into Upper California, and the occupation of the coast from San Diego to San Francisco was effected within seven or eight years.<sup>2</sup> There was hardly a show of hostility from the naked and degraded Indians of that coast. With the advantages of a good soil and an unequalled climate, the missionary establishments grew slowly at first, but later with extraordinary rapidity; and in the course of twenty or thirty years attained a remarkable prosperity. The ex-

<sup>1</sup> Clinch, *California and Its Missions*, II, 155.

<sup>2</sup> The occupation of Upper California was encouraged and aided by José Galvez, afterward the powerful minister of the Indies, for political reasons. It was feared that the English or Dutch, or "the Muscovites," might establish a colony when least expected in the port of Monterey, and it was thought wise to anticipate them.—(Richman, *California*, 65.)

periment which had been tried in Paraguay and in the Philippines was being attempted again under singularly favorable auspices.

The real difficulty in making a beginning with the Indians was again not due to hostility, but to indifference. Where game and fish were plenty they showed no inclination to change their way of life, and until crops began to grow and cattle to multiply they preferred a wandering to a settled life. At first, they thought it easier to get provisions by theft than by agriculture, but a few cattle stealers were shot and several were flogged, whereupon the remainder became much more amenable to moral training.

The fine mission buildings of the Franciscans usually comprised a church, dwellings for the priests, workshops, granaries and barns, quarters for half a dozen soldiers, lodgings for unmarried Indian women, and a prison for turbulent converts. The single men and the married people were lodged in groups of filthy huts a short distance from the mission walls.

The Indian proselytes were required to cultivate the adjacent land, and in return for their labor they received food and clothing and instruction in such things as they were capable of learning and which were considered fit for them to know. The children were given some sort of schooling. Only the most intelligent were taught to read and write, but church doctrines and the principles of morality were imparted to all by the good fathers, and some effort was made at manual training.

Near each group of missions in Upper California—at San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco—there was a presidio or military post. The presidial troops were not usually a part of the regular army. They formed, properly speaking, a separate establishment and were generally attached permanently to a particular post, so that they were rather armed and subsidized settlers than soldiers. Their main duty was to act as a police among the Indians, but only under the direction or at the request of the friars. The consequences of such an organization were natural enough.

The garrisons of the presidios were idle and undisciplined. The men were often guilty of immorality and of violence to the Indians, and the commanding officers were frequently on the very worst terms with the heads of the missions.

The death-rate among the mission Indians was at all times excessively high, the deaths being greatly in excess of the births. The difference, however, was more than made up, until about 1810, by new conversions. In the ten years from 1800 to 1810, with a total mission population averaging perhaps eighteen thousand, the deaths averaged sixteen hundred a year, an annual death-rate of nearly ninety in a thousand.<sup>1</sup> In the next ten years, in a population of probably twenty thousand, the death-rate was over seventy-seven in a thousand.<sup>2</sup> At San Juan Bautista, between 1800 and 1810, where there were on an average no more than six hundred Indians at any one time, the deaths in the ten years averaged ninety-nine;<sup>3</sup> and at San Luis Rey, which had the best record in this regard, the average annual death-rate was always over forty in a thousand.<sup>4</sup> There were some dreadful epidemics, especially of measles and tuberculosis, which terrified the Indians, and on one occasion at least led them temporarily to abjure Christianity; but the fact of the continued great mortality offers no mystery to those who are at all familiar with the diseases common in ill-policed camps. Syphilis, brought by the Mexican soldiery, was also a terrible scourge.

Mexican settlers came slowly and even reluctantly. In fact, they did not come at all except as soldiers, or in return for special inducements. Early in 1776 a body of about two hundred colonists came to California. They were all clothed, armed, and transported at the expense of the government; they were promised rations for all members of their families for the first five years; and the workingmen were to be paid wages for the first two.<sup>5</sup>

Settlers at San José in 1777 were paid by the government

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, II, 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 258.

ten dollars a month besides an allowance of rations, and each was supplied as a loan with cattle, seeds, and tools.<sup>1</sup>

By the *reglamento* of 1781 all Mexican settlers in California were to be paid wages by the government, on a diminishing scale, for five years; they were each to have a grant of land; to be supplied with animals, tools, and seed, which they were to pay for in instalments; to have the use of public lands for pasture and firewood; and to be free of taxes for five years. In return, the settlers were required to sell all their produce to the government, and were to be ready to act as a militia. The lands granted them could not be mortgaged or sold, and their methods of agriculture were minutely prescribed.<sup>2</sup>

Even such liberal terms failed to prove attractive. In 1779 the government sought to enlist a body of twenty-four settlers with families. After some months' effort, fourteen were secured. Two of them deserted before reaching California and one seems not to have started at all. With the eleven remaining families the pueblo of Los Angeles was founded, but early in 1782 three of the settlers were sent away as useless to themselves and the community. Of the eight men left, four were Mexican Indians, one was a mestizo, or half-breed, two were mulattoes, and one was of pure Spanish descent.<sup>3</sup>

Another town (Branciforte, after the viceroy) was projected and seventeen persons from Guadalajara were imported to found it. They arrived at Monterey in May, 1797, but within three years the settlement had ceased to exist, in spite of elaborate governmental regulations for its welfare.<sup>4</sup>

In 1797 "vagrants and minor criminals" were ordered to be collected and shipped to found a new settlement.<sup>5</sup>

But although there were few immigrants, and though the mission Indians were wretched workmen, the colonies of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 339-346; Richman, *op. cit.*, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, I, 565-571; Richman, 172.

<sup>4</sup> Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, I, 568. After 1797 and down to 1810, at least, there were no immigrants except convicts and a few women.—(*Ibid.*, II, 168, 169.)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

Upper California prospered exceedingly. By 1810, the year of the outbreak of revolution in Mexico, it was estimated that there were something over two thousand Mexicans, men, women, and children, living in the midst of a population of not quite twenty thousand christianized California Indians. This agricultural population raised, one year with another, something under a hundred thousand bushels of wheat and a little flax.<sup>1</sup> But its great wealth was in flocks and herds. It is believed that there were in the community no less than a hundred and sixty thousand head of cattle, horses, and mules, and almost as many head of sheep. Indeed, the horses had become so numerous that they were regarded as a nuisance, and were slaughtered in great numbers.<sup>2</sup>

Upper California was much too remote from the actual scene of the Mexican revolution to be directly affected by the varying phases of that long struggle, but it suffered indirectly through the withdrawal of governmental and ecclesiastical support. The soldiers were unpaid, the presidios fell to ruin, and no new settlers—not even convicts—arrived from Mexico. The friars grew old and some died; few new missionaries arrived; and the ranks of the clergy began to thin. The missions did indeed continue their peaceful existence by a sort of moral impetus acquired in earlier days, and their cattle and crops supported the government. But they had ceased to grow in numbers, and the eager striving after spiritual conquest which had animated the original missionaries was gone. The controversies between the priests and the soldiery continued from force of habit, but they were no longer very serious, and the land remained ignorant, slothful, comfortable, and happy.

The failure to send supplies from Mexico resulted in the

<sup>1</sup> The indolence of the settlers was answerable for the relative smallness of the crops. As early as 1796 the friars complained that the people were a set of idlers, who had "scant relish for work," and were quite content to let the native Indians sow, plough, and reap. "Confident that the Gentiles are working, the settlers pass the day singing. The young men wander on horseback through the *rancherías* soliciting the women to immorality."—(Richman, 171.)

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, II, 182.